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NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY

THROUGH

SYRIA AND PALESTINE

IN 1851 AND 1852

BY

C. W. M. VAN DE VELDE

LATE LIEUTENANT DUTCH R.N., CHEVALIER OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR.

TRANSLATED UNDER THE AUTHOR'S SUPERINTENDENCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Cor. iv. 18.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,
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A

JOURNEY THROUGH SYRIA AND PALESTINE

IN 1851 AND 1852.

TOUR TO THE DEAD SEA, AND THROUGH THE SOUTHERN PARTS OF JUDEA.

WADI URTAS (SOLOMON'S GARDENS),
March 22, 1852.

"He who on God his burthen lays
With him is hid and safe always."

YES, my friend, this day has again presented a striking proof of the above. Could you receive this letter at the same time with that which I despatched at noon to you from Jerusalem, you could hardly believe that my circumstances should have been so changed in a few hours. At present, in consequence of having received the letters that were sent off to you, you will be thinking that no doubt I shall soon return, and stand before you, disheartened and disappointed,—and behold, there is nothing less likely than that. On the contrary, my investigations are now entering on what may be the most important part of my whole journey. But I must at once satisfy your curiosity with respect to the causes that have produced so sudden a change.

I shut up my letter-book, took the lines I had written to you to the British consulate, again inquired of Mr Danous if he was sure there were no letters for me, got the answer—Oh! I am quite sure of it, sir!—and rode out at the Jaffa-gate. My mind was quite composed. The Lord gave me full confidence in His wise and watchful love. Had not I always found throughout my whole journey,—nay, throughout my whole life,—that "His eye was upon me?" So, then, I rode down the footpaths along the slope of the Valley of Gihon, then turned round towards the left, away by the side of the Lower pool, on the further side of the valley, and had just once more assured myself of my being on the right road by asking one of the passers-by if this was the way to Bethlehem, when I heard some one calling after me, "Ya chawadja, chawadja!" It was one of the servants of the consulate who was running after me, to say that two gentlemen were at Mr Finn's, who were very desirous to speak with me. Two gentlemen, thought I; who can these be? But come, let me go back for a little: Bethlehem is at no great distance, and a good part of the day is yet before me. In a few minutes I had returned to the consulate, and there found Dr Beima, of Leyden, an old friend and fellow-countryman, who, in company with one of his friends, was on a journey to the East, and had been some days in Jerusalem without either of us being aware of the other's residence there. While examining the small cabinet of curiosities at the British consulate, he had learned from Mrs Finn that there was another Netherlander in Jerusalem. My name had been mentioned and recognized, and a ser-

vant who had seen me ride out of the Jaffa-gate was instantly at my heels to call me back to see my Netherlands friend. You may well imagine how heartily we shook each other by the hand. In a few moments we mutually communicated to each other our adventures in Palestine, as well as our future travelling arrangements, and the idea of being able to combine these presented an alluring prospect to me. Nevertheless, our different interests called us too far apart. Again we shook hands. "Well," said my friend, "is it not strange that we" (he and his companion) "are the first Frieslanders that, so far as is known, have trodden the Holy Land since the time of the Crusades?"

"You do well, my dear Dr B.," I rejoined, "to add, 'in so far as is known.'"

"How so?"

"I, too, have had the privilege of being born in Friesland, and I have already been some months in Palestine. But I hope this disappointment in your boast you will not consider the worst you meet with in your journey. May the Lord be with you, and make your way happy and prosperous! Farewell, my hearty farewell!"

"Farewell, my friend," he replied, "farewell!"

While we were thus parting, the servant stood waiting until our farewells should be over, and then handed me a packet of letters, with the words, Heida katib chawadja! (Here are letters for you, sir!)

"Letters! and one, two, three, four, all at once! where come these from?"

"From the post, sir!"

"I was told, just now, that there were no letters for me."

"It was a mistake, sir."

I was confounded. But fancy now, I open one of the letters, the address of which I recognized, and the first thing that met my eye was a bank-note. I open a second, and a bank-note accompanies that too; and so, too, with the third; while the fourth contained directions from a friend, but slightly known to me, to draw bills of exchange to the amount of so much at this place and that, in order to meet the difficulties that might arise from the robbery committed at Hâsbeiya!

A moment before, helpless—now all my wants at once relieved! It was too much for me! . . . . I made my way out with all haste; I needed to be alone and in the open air. I again rode along the road up to Bethlehem.

When out of the din of the city, I took the letters out of my pocket, and now began to read them.

"My dear Sir,

* * * * * * *

"In proportion to our delight at the favourable commencement of your expedition, was our grief when we heard of the robbery. We feel for your position, but we hope you may still recover your property. But, in case you should not succeed, and rather than that you should abandon your object, I send you inclosed a bill on London for £ . . which I hope will put you all right. In case you require any more, will you please let me know, and we will be glad," &c.

Another letter ran thus :—

"My dear Friend,—The inclosed Bank of England note for £ . . is a little contribution, of which we beg your acceptance, towards the loss you sustained from thieves. Mr —— was kind enough to send me your letter to him, in which you mention the vexatious circumstance; and, when I had read it at the breakfast table, we all felt for you, and at once made a collection, to which my good wife and children, as well as myself, contributed, and now with very great pleasure I send you the amount. It will do a little at least towards replacing what the thieves carried off. We do not forget to pray that a gracious Providence may watch over all your steps, and direct them all, so that you may, as the result of your travels in those scenes of deepest and undying interest, promote the glory of Him who there lived and laboured, and died for our salvation."

The third letter contained these words :—

"My dear Sir,—From a letter from you to ——, I learned what had befallen you at Hâsbeiya. I feel very much for you; it is a severe trial to begin with, but I am sure that you rest your trust in the right place. He knows what is best for us, and though His dispensations taste sometimes hard to us shortsighted worms, yet we will at last acknowledge that everything was calculated for our good, for our everlasting welfare.

"I do not know in the least what is the extent of your means, and if the amount stolen from you is to

you a very serious loss, or if it does seriously interfere with your prospects. My opinion is (and it cannot be the wrong one), that our property belongs to our Creator. I am not rich, nor even at this moment in easy circumstances; but what I can spare I will willingly share with you, if you have occasion to be in want of it. If so, write to me with the same frank and open Christian and brotherly feeling as dictates this offer to you, and I will try and help you to the greatest possible extent.

"I am aware that you have several brothers that may help you probably more efficaciously than I can; but if my share of help is needed in the least, I shall consider it a blessing coming from God, to be able to give a glass of water to one of my Christian brothers.

"I hope to hear from you soon, and that you have been enabled to resume your toilsome work. May a Saviour's blessing rest on your endeavours!"

The friend who wrote to me thus I had seen but a very few times.

The last letter, in fine, contained among other things what follows:—

"Beloved brother! The Lord has opened the hearts of his children here to send you a small contribution, which I hope will come safe to hand. 'Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God' (Phil. iv. 6). Should you be able to complete your survey, it will be greatly for the advantage of the Israel of God. He will be with you in all places whither you go. He will never leave you nor

forsake you. Did He not bless Job's latter end more than his beginning? And is He not able 'to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think?' (Ephes. iii. 20). 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart,' and you will find that 'His eye will be upon you' (Ps. xxxiii. 18), 'and His ear open unto your cry' (Ps. xxxiv 15)."

This unexpected result, the tender love of the heavenly Father, the affectionate words of my friends, accompanied as they were with these proofs of their sympathy, all this overpowered me, ay, almost more than I could bear! Such goodness on God's part towards such a sinner! O that I could have a deeper comprehension of it, and could more thankfully acknowledge it! The ride along the Plain of Rephaim to Bethlehem, belongs to those moments of my life on which I shall ever look back during times of trial. Then did the Lord deliver me out of great distresses, He caused me to experience His love, and put joyful songs of deliverance into my mouth.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name."

And as if this eminent proof of God's love were an introduction to a right understanding of the infinitely greatest act of His compassion, the gift of His Son for sinners,* there lay Bethlehem before me, with the never dying chorus of the heavenly host:

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace,
Good will toward men!" †

* Rom. vi. 8. † Luke ii. 14.

To be approaching Bethlehem at the very time when the Lord Himself, by the leadings of His Providence, was disposing my mind to contemplate His love to us in Christ, was indeed a great and unlooked-for satisfaction. I quite sank under the idea of His incomparable compassion. And fancy now, nobody was with me to disturb my reflections; Philip and Ferez were already far ahead with the mule-driver and the baggage; I was quite alone, and could, with an enlarged heart, lift up my voice in praise—

> Good news to earth—to mankind grace!
> Heaven's hosts their hallelujahs raise!
> That song we will repeat, although
> Its depth of meaning none can know.
> Grace to mankind! The Son of God
> Comes down to earth as his abode;
> To sinners he in love draws nigh;
> Praise ye our God! Him glorify.

That my thoughts were little directed to earthly objects, or, to speak more plainly, that my soul was too much engrossed with higher things, to be able to fix its attention on the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, you can easily understand. It is well that this subjects you to no great loss; for, besides that at present this road has nothing remarkable about it, many travellers have already passed along it, and have described it. I recollect, as its general features, that the road is very wide; that it runs on, with a few undulations, to the Greek convent of Elijah, which stands precisely half way, or one hour from Jerusalem; that on its west side the broad plain of Rephaim lies, which plain is very fertile (as may be seen from Isaiah xvii. 5), and is bounded on its western side by low hill-tops, while towards the east

there appears a sea of brown and whitish mountains, most of which have pointed conical summits; and that behind these the Dead Sea lies hid, while the mountains of Moab, with their translucent tints, bound the prospect. About three quarters of an hour from the city, it is said, there stood once by the side of the road a large terebinth, under the shade of which Joseph and Mary, and the infant Jesus, rested, when they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.* Near the convent of Elijah there is an old well, in whose water the wearied "wise men of the East," who had sat down beside it, first saw again the star that they had seen in the East, but had afterwards lost sight of,—on the authority of tradition, of course,—and "rejoiced with exceeding great joy."† The convent of Elijah has been built upon the place where tradition alleges that the prophet sat down, much depressed, under an olive-tree, yet was miraculously fed and strengthened by an angel. 1 Kings xix. 3 places this, however, a day's journey to the south of Beersheba, and then, in v. 5, speaks of a juniper-tree, not of an olive-tree. The convent stands on the left or east side of the road, and is surrounded with a garden and a high wall. On the opposite side of the road, too, there is a fine olive-garden, the shade of which looks pleasant contrasted with the bareness of the rest of the landscape. No sooner does one approach this point than a new scene opens out before him. A broad valley full of rocky banks and knolls runs in a transverse direction, through the hill-plateau of Judea. To the left a pretty steep path runs down between stunted olive-trees,

* Luke ii. 22. † Matt. ii. 10.

and then goes up on the opposite side away over the hill on which the village of Beit-jala lies, the Zelzah of 1 Sam. x. 2,* or Zela, where David caused the bones of Saul and Jonathan to be buried in the grave of Saul's father Kish. Beit-jala looks rather pleasantly from the verdant olive gardens that environ it. Suppose you want to take the nearest road to Hebron, you must keep to the path leading past the tomb of Rachel, which is situate at a full quarter of an hour's distance from the convent of Elijah; you must leave Beit-jala on the right, and follow the track straight south. Rachel's tomb makes no small appearance, with its white plastered dome, which has been often renewed, as travellers inform us; but the tomb is known with sufficient certainty to stand on the same spot where "Rachel died, and was buried, on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem," and where "Jacob set a pillar upon her grave." † On the further side of this broad valley the way advances over the heights to the valley of Hebron. What now, however, keeps our attention most engrossed is Bethlehem, "not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." ‡ It lies at not more than a half-hour's distance from the convent of Elijah, on the ridge of a range of white chalk-hills, which runs down with a steep declivity to the east. The houses of Bethlehem are distinguished from all others in South Palestine by the neatness of their architecture, and their sparkling whiteness. One may at once perceive, on looking at it from a distance, that the town

* See also Joshua xviii. 28, and 2 Sam. xxi. 14.

† Gen. xxxv. 16–20. ‡ Micah v. 2; Matt. ii. 6.

is in a large measure inhabited by Christians; for nowhere do the Moslems keep their houses in such order. Nor is this town so very little; it makes a great show from whichever side it is seen. Nevertheless, how very different must it have looked in the days of our Lord! Possibly the houses might then have had the same conspicuously white colour as now; possibly the terraces along the hill of Bethlehem were then planted with olive-trees and vineyards, as now, and presented in winter a dry and far from promising aspect, but in summer, on the contrary, a rich covering of verdant foliage, beneath which the richest clusters of grapes lay concealed. Yet yonder convent that rises on the east side of the hill of Bethlehem, and is the most conspicuous building of all, was not then in existence. If we are to believe tradition, there was at that time only a natural grotto there, in which, according to the usual practice of the country, cattle were housed, and in that place it was that Mary "brought forth her first-born son—because there was no room for them in the inn."* *Is the tradition true?* This is the point on which all depends. Professor Robinson, who otherwise places little confidence in popular legends, is of opinion that there are no adequate grounds for doubting that the Bethlehem grotto was the birth-place of the Saviour. Eusebius, Jerome, Origen, and others, are the authorities who represent this to have been the case, and to them much confidence is due. Wilson,† nevertheless, justly remarks that Cyprian and Nicephorus, who are not to be rejected for the above-named writers, speak

* Luke ii. 7. † Lands of the Bible, vol. i. p. 392.

of the birth of Jesus as having occurred in a house, and not in a grotto; while he gives, in a note, the following remark of Maundrell:—"I cannot forbear to mention in this place an observation which is very obvious to all that visit the Holy Land, viz., that almost all passages and histories related in the Gospel are represented by them that undertake to shew where everything was done, as having been done, most of them, in grottoes; and that, even in such cases, where the condition and the circumstances of the actions themselves seem to require places of another nature. Thus, if you would see the place where St Anne was delivered of the Blessed Virgin, you are carried to a grotto; if the place of the Annunciation, it is also a grotto; if the place where the Blessed Virgin saluted Elizabeth; if that of the Baptist's, or that of our Blessed Saviour's Nativity; if that of the Agony; or that of St Peter's Repentance; or that where the Apostles made the Creed; or that of the Transfiguration; all these places are also grottoes. And, in a word, wherever you go, you find almost everything is represented as done under ground. Certainly grottoes were anciently held in great esteem; or else they could never have been assigned, in spite of all probability, for the places in which were done so many various actions. Perhaps it was the hermits' way of living in grottoes from the fifth or sixth century downward, that has brought them ever since to be in so great reputation."—*Maundrell's Travels*, p. 114. As for Eusebius, Jerome, and others, Wilson frankly says, that "though they lived near the era of redemption, they must have shewn a greater deference to the inci-

pient credulity and superstition of their times, which seem, wherever practicable, to enshrine themselves in grottoes, than to a fair interpretation of the plain narrative of the evangelists. . . . . The manifest discrepancy of even the oldest traditions with the sacred text in this case, is most instructive, and shews to us that the early Christians, in the true spirit of our holy faith, were more concerned with the great events which they were called to contemplate, than with the localities, however interesting in their associations, at which these events were transacted."

As almost everywhere else in Palestine, so also at Bethlehem, one must be satisfied with a general view of the prominent features of the place. Thus far is there an agreement between the Bethlehem Ephrata of Scripture and the Beit-lahm of our times. The same position on the ridge of yonder hill, fully 2400 English feet above the level of the sea, or somewhat higher than Jerusalem; the same white, soft, calcareous formation; the same environing hills; Rachel's monument also, although it has often been renewed since that time, and perhaps changed in its form, but still situated on the selfsame spot. But to look for any further agreement leads only to error and disappointment, to a superstitious veneration for earth and stone, or to offence at the desecration of certain places in our estimation considered holy.

The field of the shepherds, where the heavenly host proclaimed God's praise, is not within sight when we look from this side. It lies behind, or to the south-east of the hill of Bethlehem. On the contrary, all here looks dry and rocky, so that one can hardly be-

lieve that a field for shepherds, or at least a grassy meadow, could exist in these districts. Another of the remarkable things about Bethlehem is David's Fountain,* the well of which David longed to drink when he was in a stronghold near Adullam, and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim, while they at the same time had a garrison in Bethlehem. An ancient cistern, with four or five holes in the solid rock, at about ten minutes' distance to the north of the eastern corner of the hill of Bethlehem, is pointed out by the natives as Bir-Daoud, that is David's Well. Dr Robinson doubts the identity of the well, but others think there are no good grounds for doing so. Alas! there are few points in this country about which people are agreed; and, what is much to be lamented, ambition and rivalry have not unfrequently too much influence in the discovery of new places and the rejection of an existing opinion. Certainly, if we consider the ancient well, shewn as David's, to be the original one, setting aside the one from which the inhabitants of the village now get their water, and which is an ordinary well close to the convent on the slope of the hill, then Bethlehem must have once extended ten minutes further to the north, and must have lain in times of old, not, as now, on the summit, but on the northern rise of the hill, for the well was, according to 2 Sam. xxiii. 15, *by* (*in*, in the Dutch version) the gate; and according to 1 Chron. xi. 7, *at* the gate (*under*, in the Dutch version). I find in the descriptions of travellers that the common opinion is, that David's captains had come from the south-east

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 13–17.

in order to obtain, at the risk of their lives, the so much longed-for water, while it is supposed that David himself was then in the great cave that is not far to the south-east of Bethlehem, which cave is generally held to have been that of Adullam. But, according to Joshua xv. 35, Adullam lay "*in the valley,*" that is, in the undulating plain at the western base of the mountains of Judea, and, consequently, to the south-west of Bethlehem. Be this as it may, David's *men* had in any case to break through the host of the Philistines in order to reach the well, and the position of Bir-Daoud agrees well with this.

My purpose of going past Bethlehem to the farm of Mr Mashullam in Wadi-Urtas, lying a half-hour beyond Bethlehem, would not have taken me into that town to-day, but that I had made an appointment, through Mr Danous, with Shech Hamdan to meet with me at Bethlehem, where I intended to enter into an agreement with him for the expedition to the Dead Sea. So I rode into Bethlehem, and found my man at his post, waiting at the small and only door of the renowned convent. Here, however, all possibility of having a conference was cut short by Philip having gone forward with my effects to Mr Mashullam's, and by my knowing too little Arabic to be able to carry on a conversation about a matter of piastres with a Bedouin shech. It is true that I might have found assistance in the convent: Shech Hamdan had already knocked at the door for me, and one of the *padres* soon opened it. But the convent of Bethlehem did not suit my ideas, after the descriptions I had read of it, and after what I had experienced in the Church of the Sepulchre

at Jerusalem. It is possible that beneath the roof of Helena's Church, built over the *grotto of the nativity*, the holy babe was in fact born. I will not dispute that. It is also possible that here and there something may be true of what is related regarding the other grottoes in the convent; of that, for example, in which Jerome wrote his works on the Holy Land, and that in which St Paula lies buried. I have no wish to disparage these places, and far be it from me to view them with indifference or contempt. But the idolatry and sacrilege of the so-called holy places in the Church of the Sepulchre had made too deep an impression on me to permit of my being once more, from mere curiosity, drawn to a spectacle of the same sort in the convent at Bethlehem. It was only yesterday that I read in the narrative of the Scottish missionaries of 1839 the following remark on the many handsome things they had seen in this so-called holy place:—"All is only a miserable profanation, like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; it called up in our bosoms no other feelings than disgust and indignation. If this cave were really the place of the nativity, then Popery has successfully contrived to remove out of sight the humiliation of the stable and the manger. 'The Mystery of Iniquity,' which pretends to honour, and yet so effectually conceals, both the obedience of Christ which he began at Bethlehem, and the sufferings of Christ which he accomplished at Calvary, has with no less success disfigured and concealed the places where these wonders were 'seen of angels.'" I hope, therefore, you will take it in good part that I politely declined the padre's offered welcome, by assuring him that my journey led

me elsewhere, and that the impatient Shech Hamdan had misunderstood me when he knocked at the door.

Meanwhile, I was surrounded by a group that might have afforded a good subject for a painter. You have no doubt seen in the descriptions one may read of Bethlehem, that the inhabitants are almost all busily occupied in the manufacture of objects, which the pilgrims take away with them as memorials of the Holy Land. The mother-of-pearl of the Red Sea, the soft red spotted species of marble of the mountains about Jerusalem, the dark gray asphalt of the Dead Sea, and the olive wood of the environs of Bethlehem, supply them with the raw materials. A host of these industrials had gathered round me, offering me for sale crosses, rosaries, cups, vases, and I cannot tell you what more, while Shech Hamdan tried to draw me into a conversation about my affair, that, namely, of a safe convoy to the Dead Sea. A score of Tâ 'amirahs (Bedouïns of the Tâ 'amirah tribe) stood around him; all had long firelocks, and some of them, moreover, were armed with spears, as if about to march to battle. What good fortune these freebooters had lately met with I knew not, but it struck me that they were all decked out in new cloaks (abayas) of black goat's hair and new kafiëhs (shawls of silk and cotton tissue, and striped red and yellow, wherewith they cover their heads). Their new clothing gave them a pleasing appearance. On me, at least, they made this impression, and had I not known from the accounts of other travellers what sort of people I had to do with, I should not have readily taken them for freebooters. On the contrary, the expression of the bright falcon's

eye, and the hooked hawk-nose, was tempered with a dash of unaffected good-nature, which, at least, in so far as that party of them was concerned, very much reconciled me to the Bedouïns.

Yet experience would shew what they really were. As for to-day, I had nothing yet to do with them. Shech Hamdan followed me at my request to Mr Mashullam's, while his staff remained behind. When I was out of the den of the Bethlehem curiosity-sellers, and now was riding down the silent slope of the hill to Wadi-Urtas, or as the valley is here called Wadi-Tâ 'amirah, I began to perceive that the exhibition of these gaily dressed Bedouïns was a stratagem on the part of their chief, contrived for the purpose of giving me a high idea of his tribe, and of the powerful protection which I should enjoy, were I but disposed to agree to the amount of piastres that was wanted. Yet the cunning shech had taken all this trouble to no purpose; for Mr Mashullam gave me such information with respect to the price that I should have to pay for an escort on the journey I was going to undertake, and the sum that Shech Hamdan asked so far exceeded Mr Mashullam's computation, that it was impossible for me to come to a settlement with him.

"You have spoilt your affair, sir," said Mr Mashullam, "by putting it into the hands of Danous."

"How so? It was the only course I could follow."

"Danous well knows what matter he has in hand," answered he, with an eye that said a great deal. "In what he wrote to Shech Hamdan about the appointment to meet you at Bethlehem, he has represented you, as every other traveller through the channel of

the British consulate is represented, almost as a person who has too much money, and does not know how to get quit of it. Naturally, the greed of the Bedouïns is excited to the utmost by such a description, and Shech Hamdan is now convinced that you are about, in one way or another, to throw away some thousands of piastres in satisfying your curiosity with respect to the Dead Sea. He very well knows that should you refuse his price, you must make an agreement with some other Bedouïn tribe, and that they will demand nothing less. And the consequence is, that he is not now to be induced to lower his price."

"But according to what standard, then, do the Bedouïns regulate their price for allowing travellers to pass unmolested, and for accompanying them as escorts?"

"Standard! Why, according to any standard that the gentlemen who travel themselves choose to fix. For example, there came last year a party of four or five French gentlemen (M. de Saulcy and his fellow-travellers), who travelled over a great part of the west coast of the Dead Sea, and Shech Hamdan was one of those with whom they had to enter into a contract with that object in view. Piastres seemed to be very abundant with those gentlemen; for I have heard the Bedouïns say that he even forced more gold upon them than they could with a good conscience accept, and I assure you the conscience of a Bedouïn is a wide one when the question comes to be of piastres. And when they are once spoilt, you can understand they do not easily lower their standard again."

I now fully comprehended how matters stood.

Mr Mashullam received Shech Hamdan on a foot-

ing of intimacy, and the shech shewed a wonderful degree of respect for him. Pipes were smoked during the conference, and coffee, with sugar, of which the Bedouïns are extremely fond, was liberally offered; what favourable effect Mr Mashullam's influence would have on the transaction was not long of being seen. But Shech Hamdan would not lower his terms, and refused, probably in the hope of my yielding at last, to take the sum that was offered; while Mr M. assured me that, with his assistance, I should meet with a better chance with one of the other Bedouïn chiefs. Once more, and this was perhaps for the tenth time, the shech went over the names of the places to which I wished to go:—meen hoon alla 'Ain Jiddî; meen 'Ain Jiddî alla Sebbeh; (from this to Engedi, from Engedi to Masada).

Nahm (yes), as often answered Mr Mashullam.

Meen (from) Sebbeh alla (to) Zuweira—alla Jebel Usdûm—alla Kûrnûb (in the southern wilderness)—alla 'Ar'ârah (Aroër)—alla Bir-sheba (Beersheba)—alla Beit-Jebrîn.

"Nahm, challas!" (yes, you have gone over the whole), rejoined Mr Mashullam. But it was all to no purpose. At last the shech rose and withdrew.

"And who is this kind friend, Mr Mashullam, do you ask, who was so serviceable to you in this negotiation?"

"Mr Mashullam (or Meshullam) came to Jerusalem at the commencement of 1841, for the purpose of establishing himself there.* Some years before that,

* See Rev. F. C. Ewald, *Journal of Missionary Labours in the City of Jerusalem.* London: 1846. Second edition, p. 90.

the missionary Ewald had become acquainted with him and his family at Tunis. Having removed from thence to Malta, they were instructed in the way of the gospel by the missionary (now Bishop) Gobat, and on the 19th of July 1840, were baptized. 'I have reason to believe,' wrote Mr Gobat at that time, 'that the man is a true Israelite, and a living Christian.' Many books of travels have spoken of Mr M. as a keeper of lodgings in Jerusalem; until, scarcely three years ago, he withdrew from the din and bustle of the world to this calm valley behind the hills of Bethlehem. As a Christian and a British subject he was not allowed to purchase any landed property here, but this difficulty was overcome by his taking land under a long lease. Mr M. built for himself, close beside the ruins of the ancient Etam,* a small house, began to till the valley, which, though rocky, is watered by a running stream, ploughed, planted, and sowed, and may now gather in the fruits of his enterprise and industry. Yet his farm in Wadi-Urtas has not been brought to what it is without effort and difficulty, although even as yet it can be called only a beginning. Wadi-Urtas is a spot so rocky and bare, that it is hardly possible to conceive how Solomon could ever have thought of laying out his renowned pleasure-gardens in it; it is a narrow glen, betwixt high, bare, gray, calcareous hills, and a favourite camping ground of the Bedouïns. Hitherto they had been able in undisturbed repose to enjoy themselves at the charming brook; how then could they tolerate the presence of this foreign agriculturist? They were resolved to expel

* 2 Chron. xi. 6.

him, and accordingly by day and by night he was molested and annoyed. Shots were even fired in the darkness of the night upon the quiet inhabitants of the valley from the heights. But M. kept his ground; by day he received the Bedouïns with kindness and goodwill, and redoubled his vigilance at night. Small services which he rendered to the Bedouïns ere long procured him friends among them; they began to appreciate his moral worth, and perceived that his establishing himself there was to be no disadvantage to them; and M.'s moral influence has now advanced so far that he is esteemed, honoured, and respected as the father of their fathers. Mashullam, as they have often experienced, stands under British protection, and has many a time done them service as a counsellor and mediator, when they have happened to fall out with the Turkish government at Jerusalem,—a matter of frequent occurrence, owing both to the despotic doings of the government, and to the lawless and independent manners of the Bedouïns.

Meanwhile, other rivals besides the Bedouïns have appeared upon the scene. I will not venture to inquire what first suggested the idea, but certain it is that a society has been formed in North America with the object of sending over colonists to Palestine, who were in the first instance to attach themselves to Mashullam's enterprise. Mashullam's name has been paraded in the Western world, at the head of the subscription lists, and the first seven North American colonists have, only within these few days, encamped in Wadi-Urtas. In travelling from Ramleh to Jerusalem I rode up to them, and had some hours' conver-

sation with them, in the course of which they made me acquainted with their project.

"We believe, thus ran their story, from Holy Scripture, that the Lord will bring back his people Israel to Palestine, and that the time is at hand when He will shew His mercy for His banished ones. We are convinced also that the Lord in this case, as in His general government of the world, will make use of men in accomplishing all that He has promised. Palestine now lies waste and desolate, but if it is to be made fit for being inhabited, then must the soil be broken up and cultivated as in former times, just as the hearts of its inhabitants also must be broken up and cultivated to receive the seed sown by the Spirit. Well, then, we have forsaken our land and kindred in order to come and settle in Palestine. We will till the ground, in order to provide for our necessities by the labour of our hands, and to teach, besides, the poor Jews of Jerusalem how to procure their daily bread in this manner. At the same time we will make known to them Jesus, the Son of God, as the promised Messias who has fulfilled all things, and will thereupon wait for God's gracious blessing. Here we are ready to engage in his service. Let Him do with us as seems meet to Him."

Glorious undertaking! noble deed! thought I, and felt myself much encouraged by this remarkable incident. From the ends of the earth, the Gospel brought back to the place whence its first dawning rays were spread abroad! And behold, here this evening I find myself again among these American Christian colonists. Laden camels, together with implements and all sorts

of things, have come up along with them. Mashullam has truly a company to lodge, such as he never saw before, during all the time of his keeping furnished lodgings at Jerusalem. What are these folks particularly to do here? Not a little must be arranged and granted, and built and provided for, before this numerous body be put in order. Will M. give up his land to them? Or will the colonists cultivate the ground in common with him, or under him as his servants?—How will they find any point of connexion with the Jews? These, and many further questions, suggested themselves to me while I took my place at M.'s supper table in the midst of the newly arrived colonists. All, however, is comprised in this question: Do they really pursue, as they give out, the Lord's interests, or are they deceiving themselves, and is it their own interests that they seek? If the former be true, then all will go well, even though their plan of colonization be mingled with much that is wrong and ill-advised. If the latter be the case, then I fear that the quiet Wadi-Urtas will come to witness many unpleasant occurrences. The future will shew this.*

While writing down my remarks, I see, in the 16th volume of Ritter's *Erdkunde*, p. 282, mention made of

* In a letter from a friend in Jerusalem, who at first was much taken with the undertaking of the American colonists, the following was mentioned to me under 28th Dec. 1852:—"We are disappointed with the Americans who came to Urtas; we hoped that they were about to bring American industry and energy, in connexion with sterling piety, to bear upon that infant colony; but there appears not to be a worker among them except Dwight, with whom they quickly quarrelled, and cast him out. They seemed much disposed to take possession of the whole affair; and there is great cause to fear that they are contributed by the pious zeal of persons in America, who are led to suppose

a German colony in Wadi-Urtas, in connexion with "a baptized Jew from Jerusalem" (Mashullam). The source from which Ritter communicates this (*Missions blatt des Rhein: Westph: Vereins für Israel*, July 1850, No. 7) is too trustworthy for us to doubt the authenticity of the intelligence; but I have not met with the German partners in M.'s undertaking, and the mason and joiner mentioned by Ritter must probably have found a better opening somewhere else, as they had not found any in Wadi-Urtas.

that an active mission amongst the Jews is going forward at this place, and worse still, that much of this money is collected in Mashullam's name. Mr Finn is taking some pains to settle this complicated affair." The same friend wrote on the 8th June 1853:—"Jerusalem is, and ever has been, a centre of fanaticism, by which I mean religion zealously held which is not founded on the Word of God, and sometimes mixed with a tincture of insanity. Two or three such persons have left during the last year, and I cannot but conclude the Americans who came out to Mashullam at Urtas under the head of fanatics, who collected money from Christians who believed them engaged in a missionary work amongst the Jews, which was never in fact begun. This affair issued in a fierce quarrel between them and Mashullam, and their ultimate expulsion from Attas. They had written of Mashullam before as a tree of righteousness of the Lord's planting, and that the Lord had, in a vision, directed one of them to join him, &c.; and, since the separation, they have circulated a paper accusing Mashullam of all kinds of villany—the truth of his character lying, as I conceive, between two extremes. Indeed, I have seen so much zeal for this locality, which cannot be altogether of the Spirit of God, that I should question narrowly any missionary candidate who sought employment in this land exclusively." We will make no comments on the above. Be it unto us a serious warning whenever we undertake anything for the kingdom of God. Let us ask ourselves what we really seek,—the glory *of the Lord*, or *in* the Lord's cause *our own glory*; the interest *of the Lord* or *our own*? And if the result of such an inquiry should shew us that we have been erring, then let us remember that the way to the throne of grace is opened unto us, and that we are called upon to plead for a "clean heart and a right spirit."

And now, my friend, enough for to-day. A day occupied by so much that is important, is fatiguing. I feel it to be so. And now, in laying myself down to rest, I have not to go further than two paces. The fact is, I am seated, while writing this, in my tent, which I now for the first time occupy. It stands pitched in an unsown corner of M.'s potato-garden, not far from his house. All is calm and peaceful around me. No troublesome villagers to plague me, no smoke to blind me, no vermin to rob me of sleep. O what an improvement in my travelling is this living in a tent! And then this delightfully cool and refreshing mountain air! No pleasanter or healthier mode of travelling in Palestine could be thought of. Nay, would the climate and soil permit it, I should ever thus like to travel in our own civilized country.

Good night, then, till morning!

23d March.

I have had no reason to complain of my first night in a tent. Only the sharpness of the cold sometimes awakened me, and scarcely had the dawning light made its appearance than I was on foot. Six weeks' encamping with a tent in Wadi-Urtas, in the spring, would, I am sure, invigorate all weak constitutions. What a morning this was! So bright a sky, an atmosphere so pure and bracing, and fragrant with the balsamic odour of the plants that grow upon the rocks, so delightful a chorus of singing birds, so lively a murmur from the running brook, and on the background of this scene, a little forest of fruit-trees, so gay with innumerable blossoms—truly Solomon's

gardens could not have presented a more glorious scene to me. The good old head of the house was the first of the family to be up. While Ferez was preparing the coffee, I took a walk with him through the garden. He explained to me his whole plan, shewed me his vegetables, his corn-fields, his figs, his apricots, his peach-trees, and other kinds of fruit, now arrayed in their loveliest spring attire. Our conversation ran on the objects that lay before us, and from the site of Solomon's *gardens* we naturally came to speak of Solomon's work itself. From all that I saw and heard, it was no longer difficult to understand how the great and wise king came to select this seemingly dry and barren face of rock for the cultivation of fruits. If Mashullam's clearing and tillage could make this rocky ground so profitable, what must not Solomon's operations have effected here! It is a narrow glen, no doubt, but the loose gray calcareous gravel from the rocks possesses a fertility exceeding all other kinds of soil for the production of fine fruits. The royal gardens, however, were not confined to the Wadi-Urtas; the hill-slopes to the left and right also, with their heights and hollows, a whole district of country, said M. to me, must have been covered with trees and plants, as is shewn by the names that they still bear, as "peach-hill," "nut-vale," "fig-vale," &c. Well might Solomon, looking to these, say in the evening of his life, "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards."*

You will not wonder at the Song of Solomon having been brought before my mind, when thus, on the very

* Eccles. ii. 4–6.

site of Solomon's pleasure-grounds, surrounded by so much that is lovely, and enlivened by this glorious spring morning. "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell."* All this I literally realised, even to the going down into the garden "to the spices and lilies, and to the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded," and then the "getting up early to the vineyards: let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth."†

Assuredly the prophetic poet has selected the most enchanting scenes from the kingdom of nature; the morning—the spring—the blossoming fruit-trees. O that we had faith to appropriate more the glorious things that are represented to us in these words!

Meanwhile, the little colony of Wadi-Urtas began to come forth, and this reminded me of all that I had to attend to for the day. Father M.'s conversations on many subjects were important to me; especially what he said of the Bedouïns, and how best to deal with these people. On that point, when I looked at this little, mean-looking man, in contrast with the tall robust Bedouïns, I could not but wonder at his force of character. Yes, good old Father Mashullam, your

* Song of Solomon, ii. 10–13.

† Song of Solomon, vi. 2–11; vii. 12.

small, but fiery sparkling eyes do not belie the soul that owns them.

"I will give you my son Peter to accompany you to-day," said M., "and a few servants besides. My youngster is small to be sure, but brave. He knows the Bedouïns well, and they respect him. A tour to Tekoah, to the Frank-Mountain, the cave of David, and the shepherd's field of Bethlehem, will sufficiently employ you to-day. After that you may start to-morrow morning for Hebron, and I doubt not, should it not suit you to make an agreement with the Bedouïns to-day, that you will soon get everything settled there. If Peter pleases you, then you may take him along with you to the Dead Sea. He may be of use to you as long as you are amongst the Bedouïns. Try him to-day, and see to-morrow."

"But will the Tâ 'amirahs allow us to go unmolested to Tekoah without being accompanied by them?"

"I will give you my warrant for that. Their seeing Peter with you is enough."

Good! no sooner said than done. Immediately after breakfast we made ready to start. The tent, of course, was left standing, while the mules had free permission to graze over the rocky herbage of Wadi-Urtas. I smiled at the idea of my travelling to-day among the Bedouïns, with no better protection than Peter, a youngster of fifteen, who, following the practice of the Bedouïns, slung an old firelock over his shoulder, and had hardly mounted his father's mare when, though otherwise so sedate a youth, he shewed, by his wild capers on horseback, his having been brought up among the children of Ishmael.

We followed the wadi through the corn-fields, along its silver brook. After having ridden for an hour to the south we came in front of a ruin, on the left side of the road, which the natives called Churbet-falûh. We then turned towards the south-west, still following the valley, and came half an hour further on to a well called 'Ain-Hamdeh, while the water of the brook had gradually lost itself in the quartzy sand. There a brook, thought I, and here a well, what an abundance of water! No wonder that the Bedouïns have nestled in this valley. The valley opened out upon an uneven table-land, with the broad ridge of a hill upon it, on which were ruins of considerable extent. This is Tekoah, retaining to this day its ancient name, and already described by many travellers.* It lies at two hours' distance from Mashullam's house, and at the same distance from Bethlehem. While riding up this height I saw several wells dug out in the rock, and some pillar-shafts besides, that had been hollowed out for watering-troughs. We then climbed still higher to the north-west, and found ourselves in the midst of an extensive heap of old foundation-stones of houses and other buildings. It may plainly be seen that the ruins of Tekoah, as they lie there, witness to an antiquity of only some few centuries; nevertheless, there might be seen also among those heaps of rubbish large stones and column-pieces, of an earlier era, perhaps of that Tekoah from which Joab fetched the "wise woman," who was by an artifice to induce David to bring back Absalom from Geshur to Jerusalem,† and which at a

* See, among others, Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, vol. ii. p. 128.

† 2 Sam. xiv. 2, &c.

later period was, along with Bethlehem, Etam, and other places, fortified by Rehoboam.* One of the most remarkable relics at Tekoah is a hexagonal baptismal font, of rose-coloured limestone, in the midst of the ruins of a Christian church. Small cubical fragments of ancient mosaic pavement lie spread about everywhere among the large stones.

The view from Tekoah over the surrounding country is exceedingly fine. From this point the Dead Sea presents the appearance of a charming, lovely lake, bordered by the translucent blue mountains of Moab; and the peaked hill-tops of the wilderness of Tekoah, or, if you rather will, of the wilderness of En-gedi, with their withered brown and gray slopes, still further contribute to give relief to the soft blue of the water, and of the furthest distant hills. The foreground displays some appearance of life. Here and there you see grassy spots; and elsewhere the Tâ 'amirahs might be seen ploughing and sowing. Bethlehem's gray-white rocky slopes, the convent of Elijah, and the hills of Jerusalem, now tinted with a bright cobalt, I saw to the north, and the fields of young corn in Tekoah's plain to the north-west. Opposite to Tekoah, to the east, were seen the ruins of a small castle, called by the inhabitants Kasr-Um-Lemûn; and a little further to the south another, which they call Kasr-'Antar.

As I stood at this important point surveying the prospect around me, and thought of my having the very spot before me where, when united against Jehoshaphat, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir, stood up against each

* 2 Chron. xi. 6.

other, and every one helped to destroy another, so that when Jehoshaphat and his people came to the spot they found nothing but dead bodies, instead of formidable enemies,*—as I thought also of the "watch-tower in the wilderness," mentioned in the 24th verse, which, to the best of my judgment, can nowhere more justly be supposed to have stood than on the so-called Frank-Mountain, some Bedouïns came to extort a baksheesh from us, under the pretence that they had found us on their territory. But Peter, the little fellow, answered them in a high tone, and threatened to complain of them to his father, nor was I a little surprised to see the Tâ 'amirahs steal away on being thus addressed by the youngster.

Ere long, we left the ruins and rode in a north-easterly direction down a footpath to the Frank-Mountain. Though the early morning had been cool and invigorating, the heat of the wilderness became more and more perceptible in proportion as the sun rose in the heavens and the bare rocks reflected his burning rays. It was not yet eleven o'clock, yet the heat was hardly endurable as we followed the path along the sultry rocks. After an hour's riding we came to the ruins of a village which seems to have formed a stronghold, and is called Um-Nakûs, or also el-Chareitûn, situated on the upper ridge of a wadi, which is called after the village wadi-Chareitûn. One can hardly imagine a place wilder or more inaccessible than this valley. Perpendicular cliffs rising one above another for many hundred feet form the sides that shut it in, rock above rock, ridge above ridge, fit for the habita-

tion of nothing but wild-goats. If I rightly understand the Scriptures,* then Chareitûn must have been the place where there were "sheep-cotes by the way," and where "there was a cave into which Saul went to cover his feet, while David and his men remained in the sides of the cave." And, indeed, a large cave—I am quite disposed in this case to believe tradition and to say *the* cave—lies hardly five minutes to the east of the ruin, on the south side of the wadi. Four Bedouïns whom we met here, were so very pressing with their offers to shew us the entrance to the cave, that it was impossible to refuse them. So we made our way to the spot, climbing over high flat masses of stone. The entrance is straight and completely concealed by the stones; accordingly, there prevails little or no light within, at least for those who pass from the fierce light of day into the dark cavern of the calcareous rock. The spot was sacred in my regard, and extremely remarkable.

If this be David's cave, mentioned in 1 Sam. ch. xxiv., and I find nothing to make it unlikely, then this tract of country has undergone no change since David's time. The same narrow natural vaulting at the entrance; the same huge natural chamber in the rock, probably, the place where Saul lay down to rest in the heat of the day; the same side vaults, too, where David and his men lay concealed, when, accustomed to the obscurity of the cavern, they saw Saul enter, while Saul, blinded by the glare of light outside, saw nothing of him whom he so bitterly persecuted. David's prayer "when he was in the cave" (Ps. cxlii.), was

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 1–23.

here brought impressively before my mind. Perhaps, thought I, it was in yonder dark spot that he "poured out his complaint before the Lord." David, God's favourite, persecuted and hunted even into this inhuman mountain wilderness! How is it possible! And "there was no man that would know him; no man cared for his soul!" "Brought very low" by his persecutors! But when his necessity was extreme, "when his spirit was overwhelmed within him, then the Lord knew his path!" To Him he lifted up his soul—and He attended to his cry; He delivered him out of all his distresses. Therefore did he call God, his rock, his goodness, and his fortress; his high tower, and his deliverer, his shield, and He in whom he trusted.* Well may David's prayer in the cave bear the title of *a Psalm giving instruction.* How much does it teach us! It is truly full of instruction; instruction not for this or that occasion, but for the whole path of life.

The idolatrous veneration of holy places does not seem to have penetrated here. All I saw was the names of half-a-dozen recent travellers inscribed with charcoal on the rock. For the rest, the cave seems to me to be in the same state as when David went out of it, following Saul, and "crying after him: My Lord, the king! Wherefore hearest thou men's words?" &c. "Moreover, my father, see, yea see the skirt of thy robe in my hand," &c.

Beyond this I must leave you to your own imagination. I will say nothing further than that this, of all the spots I have seen in Palestine, was that which from its unaltered condition, placed me most vividly

* Ps. cxliv. 1, 2.

in the midst of the circumstances that we find related in the Bible, and hence has made the deepest impression on me.

It appears that this cave has never been thoroughly explored. The Arabs believe that the subterranean passages run along as far as to Hebron, a distance of at least eighteen English miles. But who is to verify this? Many have already tried, they say, to advance as far as possible with torches and ropes; but every time the torches were too few and the ropes too short. People also get speedily into such a labyrinth of vaulted passages, that they know not which to enter, in order to reach the innermost recesses of the cave. This much is true, that those who are fond of such explorations, will find plenty of work in this cavern. What a retreat, too, must such a cave afford for a fugitive!

On our return to the outer world, and when we had remounted our horses, the Bedouïns, who had been our *quasi*-guides to the caves, asked for a baksheesh. Peter gave them some piastres, but not enough, according to their notions. There were four of them, they said, each must have something, and the sum they got was too small for that. The answer was, that they had obtruded themselves upon us against our will, and besides that only two of the four had accompanied us into the cave.

That is all one, shouted the other two. This land belongs to us, and this cave also; you should not put your foot into it without paying toll.

A violent altercation here arose as we were riding up the road to the Frank-Mountain. Peter would not

submit to their swindling tricks, and the Bedouïns affected to consider themselves injured men.

"You are depriving us, by your accompanying travellers, of our country's rights," shouted one of them to Peter; "but this shall not go unrevenged. What business have you with this, you young fellow? Give us our baksheesh, or I take away your gun."

"What! Do you threaten, you greedy robber! I will teach you better manners. You say you will take my gun from me. There it is, take it now, if you dare! There need not be any *taking it by force.*

As he said this he handed him the gun, with which the Bedouïn speedily wheeled about and disappeared over the hills.

I had been unable to follow the altercation, and had looked on with no small surprise. It could not be, thought I to myself, that Peter has made him a present of the gun. The tone with which he spoke, shewed a very different intention. Nevertheless, Mashullam's son laughed, and this he would not have done, had he not made sure of a favourable result. Peter at last interpreted to me all that had passed, and ended with the assurance that the Bedouïn's threats would cost him dear.

"But my good fellow," said I, "I fear you have overrated your father's influence over this people to-day. Why have you been in such haste with the offer of your gun? The Bedouïn has already disappeared with it.

"No, no, sir!" he rejoined, with a look full of self-satisfaction, "I know well what sort of fellows those Bedouïns are. It will not be a quarter of an hour be-

fore you see that rascal coming back, as a poor timid wretch, to return me the gun. But I beg you will pay no attention to him; it is not thus that I will take back the gun from him. He must be complained of to the Metzellim at Jerusalem, seized, and punished with a hundred and fifty bastinado strokes, in order to drive out of him his insolence and thievery; only after that shall I take back the gun; and be assured that for the future he will take good care not to fall foul of travellers."

I could not but admire the little gallant fellow, and was surprised at the timidity of the Bedouïns. Nevertheless, I felt quite convinced that Peter had for once reckoned too far. But behold! not ten minutes had elapsed, when there came the Bedouïn, with his companion, riding up the hills behind us, and calling out after us that he would not have the gun. But Peter kept his ground. None of us paid any attention to the shouting. We rode on as if nothing had happened, and as if nobody were calling, while the two Bedouïns followed us at the distance of an hundred paces, for above half an hour, crying and shouting that they would give back the gun, and if Peter would send nobody to receive it, they would throw it away. But Peter was immoveable.

On our return to the well 'Ain-Hamdeh we made a halt. The heat was overpowering, and we had brought with us the means of preparing an Arab refreshment, a cup of coffee. The Bedouïns availed themselves of our being no longer in movement, to make a fresh attempt upon Peter. In an almost imploring attitude they came to ask his forgiveness,

hoping that he might still be so gracious as to take back the gun. No, the youngster continued to reply; unless—he allowed himself at last to add—you will bring me a kid to-night, as an atonement for your bad behaviour. The Bedouïns took up the word with an *el-rasi* (my head be security for it), and went off well satisfied with the bargain.

Truly the lesson this gave me how to proceed with the Bedouïns was of incalculable importance. Peter had assuredly merited a kid by his firmness. Meanwhile it is evident from this incident what an influence his father has acquired over the Ta' âmirah Bedouïns of the districts about Bethlehem. And yet, had we had to encounter Bedouïns of a different tribe, roving plunderers, without any settled residence in this neighbourhood, it is needless to remark that Peter's gun would never have come into his hands again.

A few minutes after this, we had approached the foot of the Frank-Mountain. Here we dismounted, and, leaving our horses to the care of our servants, completed on foot the ascent to the top, being a rise of, perhaps, 300 feet. The lowermost part had been levelled in the form of terraces, and there the ground must in earlier times have been cultivated; after that, the hill rises pretty steep, like a regular cone. I found the description of the Frank-Mountain, or, as it is called by the Arabs, Jebel-Fareidis (*i. e.*, the hill of Paradise), by Professor Robinson,* perfectly accurate. Nor is there more to be said of it than he has written, or, in short, than that it is a conical hill, with a summit 750 feet in circumference, on which the founda-

* *Bible Researches*, vol. ii. p. 170, &c.

tions may be seen of an old wall, with four towers. In what is properly the top, a hollow has been formed, whereby the outer wall forms, as it were, a crown. The base of the hill is covered with rubbish, and on the north-west side there are the remains of a large rain-tank. Robinson gives his reasons for identifying this place with the fortress of Herodium in Josephus. He thinks there is less ground for holding the Jebel-Fareidis to be the Beth-haccerem of Jer. vi. 1; yet, considering that the hill is the loftiest elevation in the whole of this region, and is easily distinguishable at a great distance by its isolated position and its conical shape, I know no other locality in the whole district that answers better to the place referred to in Scripture.

Whence it obtained the appellation of the Frank-Mountain seems to be uncertain. The tradition that the fortress on this hill was the last place occupied by the Crusaders in Palestine—and that, too, during a series of years—after they had been driven from all the other strongholds in the country, is subject to much doubt.

Were the travellers who visit Jerusalem, and who from it make an excursion to Bethlehem, aware of the extensive and picturesque prospect to be seen from the top of the Frank-Mountain, more of them would come to enjoy it. It is especially to be recommended for the view it presents of the northern part of the Dead Sea, and the plain of Jericho. We chanced to have an unusually clear day, and could distinguish among many other remarkable places Kerak, the second capital of Moab. Professor Robinson found himself, as he complains, disappointed in the view which he

enjoyed from the Frank-Mountain over the Dead Sea. He expected, however, too much—no less than to overlook both extremities of that sea from this one point!

As I sat admiring the singular landscape that lay stretched out around me, Peter's eyes had for some time been steadily fixed on some other object. All of a sudden he ran down the hill, was in a twinkling mounted on his mare, and flew like an arrow from a bow over stone and shrub some hundred yards forward. There he stopped, and stretched out a friendly hand to a Bedouïn of gigantic stature, who from behind yonder hills, and followed by five or six other Bedouïns, had come up as quickly as Peter had flown to him. Who was this shech whom Peter had hastened to meet with such cordiality, and almost embraced in the joy with which he greeted him? Thought I, my prospects are improving. I have been to-day regularly initiated among the Bedouïns. A few moments after, and this new company had ascended the hill. I had now to make my *début* as a traveller among the Bedouïns, and to keep myself as cool and sedate as possible, endeavouring to shew at the same time that sort of amiability which some people know so well how to assume when they wish to save their own character from the charge of being rude, without, however, being influenced by any sincere and heartfelt friendship for the opposite party —a graceful and courteous politeness. Peter introduced his friend to me as Shech Safizir, the first and the most formidable among the Bedouïns. No wonder, thought I; the fellow's whole appearance is that of a chief of banditti: nearer seven than six feet high; an

eye like lightning; a nose like a hawk's; a sash full of pistols, besides the firelock on his back, and the long pike in his hand. I believe I shall never meet with a finer specimen of a Bedouïn shech. Well, indeed, it was that the meeting betwixt us was on a friendly footing. To have been surprised by Shech Safizir, whilst alone on the Frank-Mountain, without a revolving pistol, would, I suspect, have lessened my coolness and composure.

The friends seated themselves beside me. Peter's eye sparkled with satisfaction; he had the honour to enjoy the freebooter's special favour.

"Fancy, sir, he whispered into my ear, that the Pasha of Jerusalem has already more than once sent troops to capture him on account of his robberies. Once even there came twenty men on horseback after him when he chanced to be in a house in Bethlehem; but Shech Safizir had only to shew himself in order to inspire the whole of them with such awe that they preferred an ignominious return to the Pasha, without accomplishing their purpose, to venture on a struggle, twenty as they were in number, with this one giant. If you could get him to accompany you to the Dead Sea, you could not do better."

"Well, then, make the proposal. Let us see!"

A quarter of an hour's negotiation followed about piastres and the places that I wanted to visit. But it was without result. Shech Safizir's demands, likewise, too largely exceeded father Mashullam's estimate, and our Goliath was soon on his way again, while we pursued ours back to Bethlehem. To see this robber chief testify no small respect for little Peter, was indeed a

picture. I can now understand how the lad has made himself so familiar with the manners of the Bedouïns.

The way from the Frank-Mountain to Bethlehem leads by the small village of Beit-Ta'mrah, or Beit-Ta'mr, through the windings of a partially cultivated valley. At half an hour's distance from Bethlehem, between Beit-Ta'mrah and Beit-Fahûr, where tradition says that the shepherds of Luke ii. 8 had their dwellings, you come into a beautiful plain encompassed with knolls, partly planted with olive-trees, and partly sown with corn. In the midst of this plain there is a garden filled with fruit-trees, and within the garden walls are the ruins of a convent that was founded by the pious Paula. There still remains a half-dilapidated church, but, as the stones indicate, of modern architecture; the stones of the original building, and fragments of the mosaic pavement, lie scattered about. It was here that the Angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, in order to proclaim the most blissful tidings that ever were heard upon earth—"great joy that shall be to all people;" and it was here that the multitude of the heavenly host sang the greatest and most glorious hymn of praise that ever reached the ear of man. O that God's Spirit would teach us to repeat that Hallelujah! You know that no more than yourself do I respect relics. Nevertheless, I took away, as memorials of this spot, a few bits of mosaic stone and a few twigs of those olive-trees.

Following the base of Bethlehem's now barren vineyard-terraces, we reached again in safety the farm of Wadi-Urtas.

"And now, sir," said Peter's father, "what say you

of my boy? Will you have him with you to the Dead Sea?"

"Most willingly; after a good lesson from you, he may undoubtedly be of use to me among the Bedouïns."

And the result now is, that Peter's mother is still up late in the evening, busily preparing his little bundle of travelling requisites; for early to-morrow we must be on our way.

HEBRON, *24th March.*

I can hardly believe the reality, that I am actually in the city of the patriarchs; the royal residence of David during the seven years previous to his having taken the stronghold of Zion from the Jebusites, and made it the seat of his court. Yet, so it is: from Hebron, I continue the letter which I last night broke off at Etam, Solomon's pleasure-grounds.

The day proved a charming one. On this high mountain-plateau, and at this season of the year, the heat of the sun is not felt as it was yesterday among the cliffs and ridges of the barren hills of Tekoah. Moreover, the sky to-day has been almost wholly covered over with clouds, and truly Easter season is at this elevation (about 3000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean) rather cool than warm.

It was with a certain feeling of regret that I left the lovely little spot in Wadi-Urtas. But my journey had to be recommenced. Peter's father accompanied us till we were past the peach-trees, then shewed us how we must proceed along the rubbish heaps of the village of Urtas, steadily following the line of the ancient water-course, and then parted from us with his wishes for our journey's success. It was no small

trial for the legs of our poor horses to carry us out of the valley, through among the huge masses of rock, up the ascent to the aqueduct. How the laden mules got through I can hardly conceive. But both they and we succeeded in doing so, and in half an hour we reached Solomon's pools. Here you may believe we dismounted, for there was much to be looked at. Maundrell, Robinson, and others, it is true, have copiously described the "great pools," and "the sealed fountain," but the best descriptions fail to give one the impression made even by a superficial view of the scene. With respect, now, to the details of these colossal waterworks, I hope you will be contented with what Robinson has said of them.* His statements are ample and curious. In order to give you a general idea of the whole, I have taken a sketch from the rocks on the south side of the pool. In this drawing you will see the Saracenic quadrangular castle, Kâlat-el-Bûrak, on the north-west side of the pools, the uppermost and the middlemost of the three, and a part of the aqueduct; but the surface occupied by all the pools is of such extent that I could not find any point at which all three could be comprised within one angle of vision. The middle pool bears much the same relation, in point of position, to the uppermost, as the lowermost does to the middle one. This will, in some measure, give you an idea of the whole. The sketch you cannot well expect to accompany this letter, but I hope to get it ere long forwarded to you.†

* See *Bibl. Res.*, vol. ii. p. 164, &c.

† In the *Record* newspaper of 28th July 1853, an account given by a recent traveller may be seen of the vaulted chambers and passages under the pools, previously briefly mentioned by Maundrell.

The sealed fountain, of which, as it does not appear above ground, nothing is seen owing to the distance, you must, nevertheless, look for on the map on the upper side of the uppermost pool, close beside the castle.

After leaving this important place, we directed our course towards the south-west, away past the upper side of the pools, and there we found the highway from Jerusalem to Hebron, which we now followed going to the south. We here found ourselves on the lofty ridge of the hill-country of Judea, of which again the Hebron hills form the highest portion. Nevertheless you must not suppose that the hills run down here to the right and left, while the road is carried along a narrow crest. No, this ridge is itself a broad plateau, with undulating heights and hollows, and sometimes shut in to the right and left by still higher summits. It is only by going off, as it were, to the sides of the plateau, that one has a prospect, and a most extensive one, over the wilderness of Judea, the Dead Sea, the mountains of Moab, or away over the valleys of western Judea and the plain of the Philistines. The highest summits lie to the west of the road. Half an hour past Solomon's pools you strike across a wadi, which runs steep down on the left to Wadi-Urtas, and, according to Robinson, has a fountain and a water-course, which helps to supply water for the lowermost of the three large pools. This aqueduct shares in the general condition of the country—it is in ruins. The lowermost pool was quite dry, though the other two had some water in them. Among the brushwood of this wadi I saw a long fragment of wall,

unquestionably a relic of some considerable building. Tradition will have it that there stood the palace of Solomon's concubines. If this be true, those beauties could not have desired a more picturesque country residence.

The highway to Hebron runs along, wide and open. The further one advances, the more do the bare rocks disappear, here beneath wild brushwood there beneath corn-fields, and elsewhere broken, levelled and laid out in terraces for the cultivation of the vine. All testifies to an extraordinary fertility of soil. Here and there, too, villages and ruins meet the eye; as, for example, Fakhûr, a small village on the west side of the road, three quarters of an hour past Solomon's pools; Bir-el-Hadj-romedan, an old well, with some ruins around it, about half an hour further on, and close upon the road; half an hour further still, and also on the west side of the road, the hamlet Beit-Umma, hid beneath a clump of olive-trees, and here I saw a number of stones from ancient ruins, that had been employed in building Moslem tombs; further on, were Beit-héran, 'Ain-ed-Dirweh, and Halhûl, all three on the eastern side of the road. But while natural beauty and antiquities occupied my attention, still more affecting circumstances spoke to our feelings, as we pondered the incidents in Holy Scripture that are associated with this highway. The silent "father of the faithful," with young Isaac, whom he loved, at his side, silent like his father, followed this road when he went to offer him up to the Lord on one of the summits of Moriah (Gen. xxii.) Abraham seems then to have dwelt at Beer-sheba, and it was a part of the

road from Beer-sheba, through Hebron to Moriah (Jerusalem), that I travelled over to-day. Thus I saw the self-same hills and valleys along which Abraham then journeyed; I was surrounded by the same, or at least by nearly the same external objects. O that I might have Abraham's faith as plainly and distinctly before my eyes! How strange is the feeling when the things we find related in God's Word become a reality! It proves to me that we, much more than we ourselves are conscious of, view the persons, and the incidents spoken of in the Bible as something imaginary and fantastical, as men and things above our comprehension, and differently organised from what we are. No, they were men "subject to the like passions as we are," having the same sinful nature to struggle with, the same temptations to withstand, the same burden to bear—but they had the same Almighty God also as their Deliverer and Redeemer. Therefore, then, as Abraham believed, "accounting that God was able to raise up his son even from the dead," let the path which he trod strengthen our faith, and make us think of the "cloud of witnesses" by whom we are encompassed, so that, while looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, we may run the race that is set before us, with greater patience than we have ever yet exercised.

Had not Robinson, and after him Wilson, so minutely described the topography of the road from Bethlehem to Hebron, I should have felt obliged to give you more details with respect to it. Among the many other things that remain to be mentioned, I pass over the ancient sites of the towns of Judah in this

district. In the first volume of the *Lands of the Bible*, pp. 381-389, you will find them fully spoken of. One of the most remarkable ruins is er-Râmeh, or, as the Jews, according to their tradition, maintain, "Abraham's House," forgetting that it was not granted to Abraham to have any *settled* residence in Caanan, but that he had to dwell in tents in the field of Mamre. Robinson fully describes the large masses of wall to be found in this Râmeh. Wolcott still more minutely examined this hill of ruins, and found it covered with extensive fragments of buildings. The attention of many has been directed to these ruins; but opinions differ concerning them, and, in short, people don't know what to make of er-Râmeh. This is neither the time nor the place for me to enter upon a critical examination of the point; yet I must add a few words in confirmation of my opinion, that Wolcott is in the right, when he holds er-Râmeh near Hebron (at scarcely an hour's distance) to be the Ramah of Samuel, in contradiction to what the Jews affirm with respect to Abraham's residence, and in contradiction to those also who are willing to admit that Abraham did not live there in a house built of stones, but who say that the huge masses of wall above referred to must have belonged to a church which the emperor Constantine caused to be erected over the spot which was then pointed out as Mamre. To this, both the high antiquity of the ruins, and the distance from the burial-cave of Machpelah, seem to me to be opposed.

The difficulty of determining where to place the Ramah of Samuel, lies in the apparent contradiction between 1 Sam. i. 1 and the contents of 1 Sam. chap.

x. In 1 Sam. i. 1, Ramathaim-zophim (as appears from v. 19, the same as Ramah) is named as the city of Elkanah, the father of Samuel, a great-great-grandson of Zuph, "an Ephrathite," that is, a native of Ephratha (Bethlehem). The expression "Ramathaim-zophim of Mount Ephraim," must thus be understood as Ramah in the land of Zuph, in the hill country of Ephratha—not Mount Ephraim to the north of Benjamin's inheritance, a name which in Holy Scripture the territory of Joseph's son repeatedly bears; for that would imply a contradiction, inasmuch as Ephratha, in the tribe of Judah, cannot be said likewise to be in that of Ephraim.

In opposition to this may not the objection be started, whether the verse in question might not possibly have this meaning?—There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of Mount Ephraim, a descendant of a certain Zuph, who once dwelt at Ephratha.

I answer, No; for everywhere else in Scripture, the city from which a family begins to reckon their genealogy, is uniformly named as the city of that family, although succeeding generations may have settled elsewhere. Thus, for example, our Lord Jesus was born at Bethlehem, because Joseph and Mary, who, as respects their ancestry, were originally from Bethlehem (Luke ii. 4), had gone up thither to be enrolled, because according to the decree of the emperor, "every one was to be enrolled in his own city," —and this notwithstanding their living at a great distance from it, at Nazareth in Galilee. It appears also from David's frequent flight from Saul to Samuel,

during the lifetime of that prophet, that Ramah and Bethlehem were not far distant from each other.

The question then comes to be, Where is to be found in Judah a Ramah which answers to this condition?

Eusebius speaks of a Ramah near Rachel's tomb; and the existence of a city of that name appears first to have been forgotten by travellers in the last century, although the inhabitants of Beit-jala have still preserved the tradition of the ancient Ramah. Cornelis de Bruin,* speaking of Rachel's tomb, says among other things: "Hereabouts"—to the south-west of the tomb, and at about four hundred and fifty or five hundred yards' distance—"there is found a great quantity of massive stones and ancient foundations of buildings, of which the people of that country say that they are the remains of the ancient city of Ramah." (Jer. xxxi. 15.) True, the old massive stones lie there, and also the foundations; that here there was once a town is past all doubt; and as little can we doubt that, if the town was called Ramah, the prophecy of Jeremiah, to which Matthew refers (ch. ii. 17, 18), has its locality clearly elucidated. Yet, that this should be the same Ramah from which Saul departed when leaving Samuel (1 Sam. x. 2), is inconsistent with the too close vicinity of Rachel's tomb. Should we, on the contrary, take er-Rameh, full three-quarters of an hour to the north of Hebron, for the Ramah of 1 Sam. i. 1, then all difficulties are resolved; or let me rather express it thus: the site of er-Rameh beside Hebron answers completely to what Scripture requires for its being Ramah in the land of Zuph, in

* *Reis Naar*, &c., p. 279.

the hills of Ephratha. The distance from er-Rameh to Bethlehem is fully four hours. According to our method of naming mountains, chiefly from their most elevated summits, we should say that er-Rameh lies in the hills of Hebron; but the Scripture calls the heart of the mountains of Judah after Ephratha, on account of the important persons who had given notoriety to that small town.

One hour to the south-east of Hebron lies Ziph, the ancient Ziph of Joshua xv. *55*, at a distance of an hour and a half from er-Rameh, a distance not too much to justify the supposition that Ziph, founded by Samuel's ancestor Zuph, gave the country to the north-east of Hebron the name of "the land of Zuph," so that this Ramah could be called with all justice Ramathaim-zophim, or Ramah in the land of Zuph.

To that Ramah, accordingly, Samuel again returned at the close of his yearly circuits to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, "for there was his house (1 Sam. v. 16, 17), and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord."

After this, the ninth chapter enters upon Saul's search for his father's asses. Saul's city was Gibeah (1 Sam. xi. 4, &c.), about three hours N.N.E. of Jerusalem. Thence went Saul through the *mountains of Ephraim* (that is literally, for we have no reason to understand it otherwise, as in the case of 1 Sam. i. 1); yet his search was in vain. He appears, therefore, to have turned southwards, probably through the grassy hills between Shiloh and the vales of the Jordan (Scripture calls the country Shalisha and Shalim), until he again returned to the inheritance of Benjamin. But

all was to no purpose. Saul was not discouraged, however; he now enters the country to the south, until, having come to Ramah (in the land of Zuph), he reminds his servant that his father might now in consequence of their long absence be more concerned about them than about the asses. Upon this, however, Saul's servant recollects that in that city Samuel, the man of God, dwelt. He would be able to give them counsel. "Thy word is good," says Saul; "come, let us go." They go up the hill (er-Râmeh lies on a hill); on their way they meet young maidens going out to draw water (Wolcott remarks that he found only one large rain-tank hewn out of the rock, and two other smaller excavations, that *might have been* meant for collecting rain, from which it appears that the drinking water of the city was brought from springs or running streams outside). They ask: "Is the seer here?" and the answer is: "He is; behold, he is before you; haste, now, for he came to-day to the city"—seeing he is often absent on account of his circuits—"for there is a sacrifice of the people to-day in the high place." Saul is on that day Samuel's special guest. The royal anointing takes place on the following day "at the end of the city." Thereafter Samuel suffers the young man to depart, and shews him away by Rachel's sepulchre to the plain of Tabor (possibly at the foot of the Mount of Olives, called at this day by the Arabs Jebel-et-Tûr, that is, Tabor), where he will find men going up to Bethel, and further, to the hill of God (Mizpeh?) where there is a garrison of the Philistines. Now, it is impossible to take this course otherwise than in a direction from south to north.

Ramah's position is thus determined. Robinson has sought for Ramathaïm-Zophim in Soba, a village about two hours in a direction west by north of Jerusalem; but the walk which he thus makes Saul to have taken past Rachel's grave, is by much too roundabout and crooked to satisfy the requisitions of the Bible narrative.* As little can the Jewish tradition stand the test, which places Samuel's Ramah under the name of Nabi-Samuel at a high conical hill, situated at a short two hours' distance to the northwest of Jerusalem, a point which Robinson, I believe rightly, holds to have been Mizpeh.† The prophet, so think the Jews, and the Mohammedans think along with them, lies buried on the hill. According to 1 Sam. xxv. 1, Samuel was buried in his house at Ramah.

In fine, I would further remark that Ramah, viewed as a suburb of Hebron, or a city subject to Hebron, wholly agrees with what was required for Samuel's priestly ministration. "And they gave them (the Levites) the city of Arba, which is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. (Joshua xxi. 11.)

Of the "Naioth in (near) Ramath," of 1 Sam. xix. 18–24, whither David fled and where Saul prophesied, I have been able to discover no trace, and as little of Sechu and the great well there. To be sure, there lies to the north-east, at an hour's distance from er-Râmeh, a village called Shûk, in which we find something corresponding to the name Sechu, and Professor Robinson found, a quarter of an hour east-north-east

* *Bibl. Res.*, vol. ii. p. 328, &c. † Vol. ii. pp. 143, 144.

of Shûk, an old stone water-tank on a hill called Bir-ez-Zafaraneh,* but both localities seem to me to lie too much to the north-east of er-Râmeh, to admit of their being held to be Sechu and the great well. I had no opportunity of personally examining that district. This investigation I would recommend to such travellers as may come after me. If I might be allowed to dismiss the bearing of the name, methinks the large well 'Ain-ed-Dirweh or Dirouweh, answers better to the probable site of Sechu than the Shûk, which better corresponds to it in point of sound.

We did not proceed straight through from er-Râmeh to Hebron, but struck down a path to the right through fresh-ploughed vine-fields, and by so doing arrived in half an hour at the gigantic oak-tree, called Balût-es-Sebta, and which is said to be a surviving relic of the oak-groves of Mamre. It is one of the most splendid trees I ever saw, and its gigantic trunk speaks for its great antiquity. Meanwhile, I do not believe that there are any instances of oaks, even of this sort—namely, the oak with thick drooping bunches of foliage, and with a small prickly leaf, that go back to such a remote antiquity as tradition here asserts; but it is highly probable that this elegant and majestic tree is an off-shoot from the group under which Abraham received the Lord at the door of his tent (Gen. xviii.) No wonder that Abraham, ravished with the delightful climate of this hill country, and with the splendid oaks of Mamre, had here pitched his tent.

How solemn the spot where the God of heaven and

* *Bibl. Res.*, vol. ii. p. 185.

of earth condescended to talk with man "as a friend with his friend!"

Is this, then, the place, thought I,—a grass field with a large tree, encompassed with undulating hill tops laid out in fields and gardens? Does Mamre look quite like any other valley in this quarter? Is the place where the Lord appeared to Abraham, a piece of ground in no respect different from all around it? Yes, such is Mamre; such is this holy spot.

With what difficulty do I realise it! I am now living in the Bible country, and yet I cannot familiarise myself with the idea. Is this not a proof of the corruption of our imagination, which pictures to us the events of Scripture as if they belonged not to this world but to some other planet?

A sprig of this oak-tree I took away with me to send you as a memorial. The Balût-es-Sebta stands at the north end of the valley, perhaps fifteen minutes from the town, which is approached through beautiful olive grounds. Hebron lies along the length of the valley, and consists of four distinct groups of houses, which, however, touch on one another. First of all, in the middle group, which, like the others, is closed with gates, we drew up at the house of a Mr Besharah, a native Christian, and brother of Bishop Gobat's clerk. This person was kindly recommended to me by the Bishop as having good lodgings, and as being very obliging to travellers. I found Besharah not at home: he was with the Governor of Hebron, whose secretary he is, besides being employed in the quarantine establishment, which stands a short way off, opposite his house, Hebron being the quarantine

station for all travellers that come from Egypt through the desert. Meanwhile, his domestics shewed us a small upper room, where I found more conveniences than I had dared to look for in Hebron,—a table, chairs, a divan, a fire-place, &c.; all that was required, too, in the way of plates, glasses, &c. for having a meal in European fashion. In this last respect, however, I was already provided for by my own travelling canteen.

Here I did not pitch the tent, because there was every appearance of a fresh tempest of wind and rain. The sky had began to be overcast, even when we were at Solomon's pools, and well may I congratulate myself on being so well housed, for at this moment a storm of snow and sleet is driving over the valley, such as would have made our remaining in the tent impossible. The cold is so great that I sit as close as I can to the fire, to warm my stiffened fingers and fit them for writing. Just fancy our encountering so severe a climate here at the end of March! Besharah has much need to stop up the wide crevices in his cold small windows, so as to make better provision against such a climate. The wind howls and whistles through them with a fearful din, and I can hardly keep the candle burning by the light of which I write.

I hope with all my heart the storm won't last long; for I have been wonderfully successful in my endeavours to secure a Bedouïn escort to the Dead Sea, and would now lament being hindered from proceeding thither by rough weather.

A Bedouïn escort already, and you only a few hours in Hebron! how have you been so fortunate? you per-

haps ask me. Well, my dear friend, I had no sooner arrived than I sent Philip to the Governor to inform him of my visit. When at Jerusalem I had asked for a mandatory letter, in virtue of my firman, calling upon the authorities at Hebron, Beit-Jebrîn, and Gaza, to give me their aid in my travelling investigations, as had been done in the northern parts of the country. The Governor (Metzellim) of Hebron received me accordingly with every demonstration of respect, and while coffee and pipes, according to usual custom, were agoing, the firman and the mandate from the Jerusalem Pasha were read aloud by Besharah. Now came the question, what assistance I wanted; and the plan of my journey to the Dead Sea and the districts of southern Judea, was explained. But here the Metzellim's power fell short. He could not answer for my travelling in the territory occupied by the Bedouïns without my coming to an understanding with the Bedouïns themselves. He was a novice in his province, he assured me, and tried with many words to explain that the Sultan's authority was not so much respected by the Bedouïns as it ought to be, whenever a chance of plundering anybody fell in their way. I represented, on the other hand, that however much I was convinced of this being the deplorable truth, the firman spoke, nevertheless, of my special journey for the purpose of making surveys, and that he, the Governor, had thus to see to it in what manner effect was to be given to the order contained in the firman. I could have nothing to object to travelling with Bedouïns as guides; but I would have no negotiations with them; that was his affair; I had to do

directly with him and not with the Bedouïns. He must know, therefore, what measures to take with the Bedouïns, in order to my travelling with safety through a part of the Sultan's dominions, and obtaining the requisite information respecting the localities, &c.

The Governor had just received from the hand of one of the servants a fresh filled pipe, and this, after he himself had taken a puff or two, he handed to me with a graceful bow. No less ceremoniously was the pipe received, and the discussion now proceeded with fresh vigour, and with a fresh measure of courtesy. Philip, on such occasions, cleverly does his part. I cannot but often smile at my having to treat of great matters with great men through such a diminutive interpreter.

The Governor felt the force of all my arguments. He was desirous above all things not to sin against the firman, and thereupon began a conference with a filthily clad Bedouïn, calling himself Shech Hamzeh, who had entered the divan shortly after me. He had been seated listening with large eyes to what had been passing, and had been watching for the moment when it might be his turn to take a part. No doubt he thought he was sure to have a good catch; and after having had once more distinctly repeated to him the list of the places that I was to visit, he said that such a journey must be undertaken under the conduct of Abû-Dahûk, the most eminent of the Bedouïn shechs in those districts. He was agent for Abû-Dahûk, and asked the sum of 2500 piastres for the required escort.

This charge he proposed to the governor, and the governor proposed it to me.

"Two thousand five hundred piastres!" I replied; "are you in earnest? Is it in such a manner that a foreigner provided with a firman and a mandate is to be treated? This is worse than I have ever met with. Had I found myself in a robbers' den, and been trying to make a bargain with a robber-chief, I might have looked for some such proposal; but when seated in the divan of a Turkish governor, to be plundered as if I were among banditti, truly amazes me."

Philip durst hardly interpret these high words. The Metzellim excused himself by saying, that I was perfectly free to make an abatement, and that it was not he, but Shech Hamzeh, that had proposed to me so high a charge; to which I again replied, that of that I knew nothing, and had nothing to do with Shech Hamzeh, but only with the Governor of Hebron. He, and not I, had to negotiate for my travelling escort with the Bedouïns; and, therefore, I would hear nothing about offers or abatements. If he was not in a condition to give effect to the command of the Pasha or of the Sultan, he had only to say so, and I would communicate on the subject with the higher authorities.

"Maloum!" (so it is), replied the Metzellim, civilly enough, and thereupon resumed the contest with Shech Hamzeh, who in a few minutes abated a thousand piastres from his first demand. Yet Mr Mashullam had shewn and calculated beforehand that four hundred piastres would be a fair charge, and I had firmly resolved to keep to that. No wonder that travellers coming from Egypt or going thither pay such enor-

mous sums to the Bedouïns for the journey through the desert. Who is to fix for them the scale of charges? The Bedouïns? Their object is to extort from the travellers as much as they can; and *how* to do this experience has long taught them. Is a Bedouïn's cunning so very extraordinary? Consult daily experience in your own civilised country. How is it with travellers who happen to fall into the hands of some steam-boat or railway company, whose rate of charge is not kept down by competition? One would often think that a Bedouïn chief had the management of them!

Once more was Shech Hamzeh's offer proposed to me. It was now lowered from two thousand five hundred to one thousand piastres. It was at the same time urged upon me that my expedition would last for eight days; that I would need to take along with me twenty-five armed Bedouïns on horseback, who in more than one instance would, perhaps, have to risk their lives for me; that thus it would not come to more than forty piastres per man, and this small sum, distributed over eight days, would give each of them but five piastres per day. For this they would have to leave their tents and flocks, and daily to traverse great distances, through a difficult hill country.

This appeal to my sense of fairness and to my humanity was too much for me. I began to be convinced that I *myself* was the extortionate person, and not the Bedouïn Shech, and was very near allowing myself to be caught. But Peter whispered to me that the calculation of twenty-five armed and mounted Bedouïns was a lie. "You have no need of that, sir!"

said he; "it is not so much protection from one band of Bedouïns against another that you receive, for in the district we are about to traverse people are now living in peace; but it is more attendance as guides that you require, and also as a proof that you have come to an understanding with the Bedouïns, in order to your safely pursuing your way through the midst of them. A Bedouïn accompanying you is a proof that you have paid the tribute, which these people fancy they have a right to levy from travellers. When satisfied as to that, they will let you proceed unmolested. Keep, therefore, to the sum that my father mentioned to you."

See now who were my advisers! I had to be taught by a child.

Thus instructed, and consequently fortified with a fresh supply of resolution, I again rejected the Metzellim's proposals. I expressed my doubts as to the necessity of having twenty-five men on horseback; that, nevertheless, I would have nothing to do with it. He, the Governor, must know what protection I behoved to have; the carrying out of my surveying operations was to be seen to by him.

After long pressing, in order to find out the sum I might be inclined to pay to the Bedouïns as a sort of impost, I finally gave him to know that 400 piastres seemed to me by far too much; but that, perhaps, I might be induced to give this. I saw that it must come to this at last, that I must name a sum. The Governor mentioned it to Shech Hamzeh. And now had you but seen what followed; without saying a word he gathered up the dirty skirts of his clothes, and in a towering passion ran out of the room. I

thought the conference must now be at an end; it had already lasted long, and I feared I should have no resource but to comply with the high demands of the Bedouïns. The Metzellim, however, once more handed me his pipe. For decency's sake I had to keep my seat for a few moments longer, and—would you believe it?—in came Shech Hamzeh, and resumed his seat with us. He would agree to take 800 piastres, provided I would leave out the visit to En-gedi, because that was not immediately subject to Abû Dahûk's jurisdiction, and would detain me two days longer. In that case, too, I must be content with a smaller escort,—two men mounted, and two on foot; but he maintained that this would suffice for my safety.

The discussion lasted a quarter of an hour longer, and the result was, that Besharah, in the presence of Mustapha Aga, Governor of Hebron, made a contract, whereby Shech Hamzeh engaged for the furnishing of the contemplated escort by Abû Dahûk, which was to take me to Tell-'Arad and the camp of that Shech, further to Masada and the south-west coast of the Dead Sea, and along Kûrnûb, 'Ar 'âra h, Bir-Seba, and Gerar, to Beit-jebrîn, "without the loss of any of my effects," and further, with the stipulation that I should arrive at Beit-jebrîn as safe and unhurt as when I left Hebron —and all this in consideration of the payment of 400 piastres, whereof one half should be paid down *now* to Shech Hamzeh, and the other half be deposited in the hands of Besharah, to be paid to one of the guides, on producing an attestation from me that the journey had been duly accomplished.

This was a great affair to have got over—and be-

sides, it gave me an important lesson as to the manner of treating with the Bedouïns. From 2500 piastres I had brought old Hamzeh down to 400, and from twenty-five armed and mounted Bedouïns, down to two on horseback and two on foot. Truly the man that keeps to his purpose with this people wins his game. But there is something further that concerns the interests of my present expedition, which is not altogether without its importance. You remember I wrote to you about M. de Saulcy's journey to the Dead Sea,* and about his discovery of the ruins of the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. Well, then, Abû Dahûk is the same shech that accompanied the French traveller on his excursions. What he therefore pointed out to M. de Saulcy as the remains of the doomed cities, he can also point out to me. To have the same guides as that traveller is of no trifling importance. I shall now be able to follow M. de Saulcy step by step, and having a copy by me of his original manuscript maps, it is not likely that his ruins can escape my notice.

Still at Hebron. The storm that began on the afternoon of the day before yesterday, 26th March, has been raging furiously, with intermitted blasts of snow and rain. It could not have been worse in our northern latitudes. I have thus been kept a prisoner, not only in the city of the patriarchs, but also in Besharah's house, where we have found it no easy matter to keep up a warm enough fire to prevent being benumbed with cold. Only to-day at noon the weather began to moderate: the storm seems to be over; I shall have

* See vol. i. p. 6.

no cause to complain of it, if it be the last in the season—and there is some hope of our being able to start to-morrow morning for the camp of Abdû Dahûk.

While the unfavourable state of the weather has confined me within doors, I have availed myself of the time to read over in my books all the principal things relating to Hebron. Some hours of walking in and about the city have made me as much acquainted with it as a passing traveller can expect to be. Over and above this, I have obtained some additional information from the Governor with respect to the ancient ruins in the territory subject to his jurisdiction, and I am gratified to be able to add, from this source, some names to the lists of the cities of Judah mentioned in Joshua xv., many of which remained still unknown to us. You will find them noted down in my large map. There is one particular thing, however, which I must communicate to you at once; the existence, namely, of the name of Eshcol among the natives. Many travellers, I find, have thought it likely that the valley of Eshcol (Num. xiii. 24, and xxxii. 9) must be the wadi that, at a few minutes' distance to the north of Hebron, crosses the vale of Hebron in a direction from north-east to south-west. Now, among the remarkable places in the district of Hebron, the Governor mentioned to me the well 'Ain-Eskali (the fountain of Eshcol), adding, that its water was accounted the best in the whole world. The spring is about a quarter of an hour's walk to the north of the city, in the wadi referred to.

I regret not having availed myself still more of the Governor's disposition to be of use to me. Without

my asking him, he told me of the appearance of the remarkable cave in which the earthly remains of the patriarchs repose—the far-famed cave of Machpelah, now covered over and protected by a Mohammedan mosque. I know that the Moslems shew for that place, called el-Haram, great respect, greater even, if possible, than for the Haram-el-Sherîf in Jerusalem; and that while some, although very few, have entered the latter place, during the last by-past years, in so far as is known, nobody but Sir Moses Montefiore has had the good fortune to penetrate into the cave of Machpelah. Under this impression, it never came into my head to make any attempt to do, what appeared to me impossible, namely, to visit that sanctuary. I know not, however, what might have been the result had I made the attempt; the Governor, at least, shewed great willingness to serve me, and even drew for me a plan of the interior of the cave, and the respective positions of the sarcophagi of the different patriarchs. Now, alas! the opportunity, if it existed, has gone by; of the brief period that has been allotted for my journey to the south, I cannot afford a loss of a day for the purpose of attempting to pay a visit to the mosque el-Haram, in which, after all, it is doubtful how far I might have succeeded. I cannot, therefore, verify the description of the cave which is given by Ali Bey, the Spanish traveller of 1103–7, but which does not correspond in all parts with the account left us by Benjamin of Tudela (1160), and with that of another Jewish traveller, the unknown author of Jichus Ha-abot, 1537 (a Hebrew composition, commu-

nicated by Carmoly in his *Itineraires*, p. 417, &c.) The Rev. Vere Munro, in his *Summer Ramble in Syria in* 1835, vol. i. p. 243, &c., gives an account of the internal state of this sanctuary—an account, apparently, drawn from such pieces of information as the Governor communicated, for he did not find his way into the cave himself. Now, I need not surely repeat what so many travellers' descriptions have already communicated. Our curiosity with respect to Machpelah's cave is, I believe, sufficiently satisfied by their account of the mosque erected over it, and of the tombs, as they stand there beneath their green and red silk draperies, immediately over the original sarcophagi in the rocky chamber below. We know from Holy Scripture that Abraham bought the cave and the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, from the hand of Ephron the son of Heth, for 400 shekels of silver, and that he thereafter buried Sarah in the cave;* that his own earthly remains were buried there also by Isaac and Ishmael;† that Isaac and his wife Rebecca also repose there; that Jacob buried Leah there;‡ and that his own body, too, was transported by his sons out of Egypt thither.§ The great veneration in which this burial-place was held through all ages downwards, and which also led to the cave's being surrounded, even in the earliest period of Israel's settled possession of Canaan (probably by David), by the wall 200 feet long, 115 broad, and from 50 to 60 feet high,‖ and at a later period by the erection of the Greek Church, which, after the Saracens conquered the country, was

* Gen. xxiii. † xxv. 9. ‡ xlix. 31, 32. § l. 13.

‖ See *Bib. Researches*, vol. ii. p. 435.

changed into the mosque just mentioned,—the superstitious fears of the Moslems, who think that if Jews or Christians enter the Haram, that holy spot will for ever thereafter be defiled,—these have been the means whereby the Lord hath preserved from desecration the dust of His covenant-friends, and prevented the superstitious from making it an object of idolatrous worship.

Although not allowed to enter the mosque, I could see, nevertheless, something of the court formed by the enclosure of the mosque, as in one of my walks I passed close round the eastern side of the building. The Governor had given me a kavas to defend me against the audacities of the fanatical inhabitants, who cannot even tolerate a European's looking at the building with more than ordinary attention. With this guide, I have spent part of to-day in walking in and around Hebron. There is nothing remarkable to be seen. To be sure there is shewn somewhere in the city, in the house of one of the Moslem inhabitants, the grave of Abner (2 Sam. iii. 32), with regard to whom the legend relates that he belonged to the race of the giants; and outside the city, on the hills to the west, the grave of Jesse, David's father; but both sites, and that last mentioned in particular, are destitute of any adequate grounds of truth. The Jews will have it, too, that Adam and Eve lived here, and in a certain grotto lamented the death of Abel, while some even point to the spot where they were buried; but for neither you nor me have such legends any attractions. Of more importance are the two ancient pools, one at the north end, and the other about the

middle of the city, which, as Dr Robinson states, are a very significant proof that Hebron stood anciently where now stands the city Beit-el-chûlîl (the Arab name for Hebron, that is, the dwelling of the friend, in honour of Abraham's memory). Robinson measured these pools, and found the northmost 85 feet long, 55 broad, and 18½ feet deep, and the other 133 feet long, and as many broad, and 21½ feet deep. Nothing so accurately determines the site of ancient cities and towns as pools and fountains. These naturally remain unchanged. The learned traveller thinks he finds in Gen. xxxvii. 14, in Jacob's sending his son Joseph to Shechem "out of the vale of Hebron," another ground for proving that the Hebron of the present day has been built on the site of the ancient Hebron. Nevertheless, an old tradition says that the city stood formerly half an hour more to the north, and on the top of a hill, so that at sunrise the glittering appearance of the domes of Hebron could be seen from the temple at Jerusalem. Here we have such difficulties as are frequently to be met with in Palestine. What is there true in this? From whence and how shall the truth be discovered? Nothing but a close observation of the ruins on the hills round about the present Hebron can throw any farther light on the subject. Wolcott, in a walk which he took over those heights, saw that ruins lay scattered on all sides. How delighted I should have been to devote part of my time to these investigations! but it was out of my power. Already do I perceive that the time that I shall still be able to spend in travelling over this country—namely, from this date to the end of June—is

very far from being sufficient for the examination of all that I could have so much liked to explore. Even from Hebron I must part only half satisfied. May it be the good fortune of other travellers after me to be able to devote their time and thoughts to this important district.

It is with reluctance that I am obliged to refer you for farther particulars respecting the city of the patriarchs, to the descriptions of other travellers. I would willingly have saved you the trouble of reading them over, by making extracts and appending them to this letter, but think, my good friend, how few moments I can now spare for any such purpose. And most of the time I can spare must be devoted to giving you information about matters which other travellers have either not mentioned at all, or done so with too great brevity. Permit me, therefore, to refer you to Dr Robinson for the historical statistics of Hebron; to Wilson, who describes Hebron in a very captivating manner, for information with respect to the Jews living at Hebron; and, finally, to my own drawing of this place, for a visible representation of the city together with its surrounding hills. I took the view from the terraces of the olive gardens opposite the height to the south-west of the city. You may thus by looking at the sketch represent to yourself Abraham standing early in the morning on the height behind the city, looking toward the land of the valley of Sodom, and "he beheld, and lo the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."* The surface of the Dead Sea cannot be seen from that

* Gen. xix. 27, 28.

height, being concealed by other ridges of hills that lie between; nevertheless the valley of the Dead Sea is to be seen very plainly. It is possible, however, that Abraham may have stood on some other height, situated nearer Sodom, and where the day before "he stood before the Lord."

From Hebron's lying so hid in its still luxuriant vale of olive and fruit trees, I have been unable to take any trigonometrical surveys here. Robinson, however, gives the results of some observations taken from the hills to the north-west of Hebron, and by means of these, as well as other data from several other travellers, I hope to be able to fix its position with sufficient accuracy.

There is one further remarkable circumstance which I must point out to you. You are aware that Hebron, Jerusalem, Tiberias, and Safed, are by the Jews considered to be the four holy cities of Palestine. Well, then, it appears from various writings, that Hebron has never been altogether without Jews. It is true that their number has sometimes been small, even as low as one or two families; but this number has gradually increased. Families from Spain and Portugal, the so-called Sephardim, or from Germany, Poland, and other places, the Ashkenazim, have gradually settled there, and at present there are about sixty families of the former, and about fifty of the latter residing in it. They have each a synagogue. Both have been visited and described by Wilson and others, together with their schools and everything else that relates to their interesting condition. Contempt and suffering have at all times been their portion. In this last epoch

especially, the insurrection of Shech 'Abd-er-Rachman, who had usurped the government of Hebron, was followed by deplorable scenes of bloodshed and plunder under Ibrahim Pasha in 1834. 'Abd-er-Rachman after that revolted anew, and made himself greatly to be feared. Rabbi Schwartz, in his geographical description of Palestine, which we have already more than once referred to, gives some sketches of what the Jews of Hebron had to suffer from that cruel tyrant. Oh for the deliverance of this land, which has been so drenched with blood and tears under the atrocious government of the Mohammedans!

Unless Besharah's estimate be exaggerated, Hebron is inhabited at present by from 6000 to 7000 souls, almost all of them Moslems, and of a more fanatical and Christian-hating character than are to be found anywhere else in the country. From 280 to 300 Jews reside in the midst of them.

28th March, IN THE BEDOUÎN-CAMP OF WADI ER-RMAÎL.

It is evening, Sunday evening. My tent has been pitched here in the camp of Abû Dahûk since yesterday. God grant that it may be no longer than till to-morrow morning. The formidable Shech Abû Dahûk lies at this moment stretched out, at full length, in the tent next me. He has wearied me not a little with his requests. But now he has fallen asleep after smoking I know not how many pipes, and drinking more than a dozen cups of coffee. People say, that strong coffee stupifies the brains; I should think it probable when drunk in such excess. Mean-

while, I avail myself of this rest in which my high but troublesome host is indulging, to inform you of my adventures since yesterday morning.

I was early on foot, and tried to be early on my journey; but, be a man's arrangements and calculations what they may, it appears in this country to border on the impossible for him to start early at the commencement of a journey. Other travellers have complained of this, and nothing further remains for me than to arm myself with a double supply of patience. The hindrances we met with yesterday morning were endless; first, the muleteer was not to be found; on his coming, when he wanted to commence the lading of the mules, Ferez was not yet ready with the travelling supplies for eight or ten days, which we required both for ourselves and our horses; for in the mountains round the Dead Sea, or in the wilderness of Beersheba, neither oats nor barley is to be bought, and however the poor animals might be able to luxuriate on excellent grass, still they will require something more nutritious in order to their holding out under the daily fatigues of their journeying. Accordingly, Ferez had first to go to the bazaar, and on his return with the necessary articles, among which was a huge sackful of horse-food, the mukhari began to start difficulties with respect to that extra burden. When this matter was settled, Shech Hamzeh and the stipulated guides had to be sought for, and after all at last stood ready on the street, Besharah was kind enough, as a friend, to advise me to provide myself with a health-certificate from the superintendent of the quarantine, in order that on my return from the south

to Beit-Jebrîn, I might meet with no obstruction. I had heard so much already of the vexations of the Turkish quarantine laws, that I preferred some further delay at present to the chance of being shut up for five days afterwards in a lazaretto. So I had to find out the Turkish military physician in order to provide myself with the requisite mandate. After going round the streets for some time, I found this member of the faculty, with true Turkish *sang froid*, seated smoking on his divan. Here were fresh difficulties, however; the good doctor, a corpulent Constantinopolitan, understood Turkish well enough, but very little Arabic, and spoke it still less, so that the result of my visit was my coming back without accomplishing my purpose, seeing it was impossible for Philip, with all his gifts as a linguist, to make out what he said. His servants, however, directed me to his colleague and fellow-overseer of the Hebron quarantine, who lived in the *serai* (the governor's house). This person, an Italian, shewed the utmost possible readiness to serve me;—but, said he, a certificate of health from here is no proof of your not having come into contact with Bedouïns in the desert who have the plague, and unless you take along with you a quarantine officer, such a certificate will be of no use to you on your return into these parts. What could I allege in reply? To take such an officer for the whole journey, would be costly and troublesome. Accordingly, there was no alternative but that I should proceed without the intervention of the quarantine, and try to find my way without it to Beit-Jebrîn, or wherever else I might have to arrive at.

It was nearly nine o'clock before we were on the march. The morning was remarkably fine, and the annoyances I had met with were speedily banished from my thoughts by the beautiful landscape that surrounded me, and the enjoyment of so refreshing an atmosphere.

The charming position of Hebron will not easily be forgotten by the traveller in Palestine. When I further think of the salubrity and invigorating influence of the climate, I adore the loving-kindness of God in appointing such a residence for the fathers of the tribes of Israel. Had Hebron lain a day's journey more to the north—that is, had it been situated more in the centre of the country—how admirably adapted would it also have been for a royal residence! David found the disadvantages arising from its southern position, and transferred his court to Jerusalem. Yet I can imagine that, for many reasons, he must have left Hebron with reluctance. And is it not lamentable that this admirable hill-country should now lie almost quite neglected, as of no use to mankind? If only converted Jewish colonists were able quietly to settle here, what could be thought more desirable! But, alas! the barbarous Moslem and the plundering Bedouïn make any such settlement as yet impossible.

Will not the sound of rejoicing be great, when the Lord brings hither again His captive ones from the ends of the earth?

Shech Hamzeh left me when we were a little beyond the olive enclosures of Hebron. His countenance had brightened up at the sight of the piastres; and two of his people, a Bedouïn and a Nubian slave, were now

charged with the task of conducting us to the camp of Abû Dahûk.

For an hour we proceeded through low undulating valleys, where the hills assumed in proportion as we advanced a more rocky character than I had observed round Hebron. The short thorny oak-thickets, otherwise so abundant, became more stunted and more thinly spread, not finding the same depth of soil for their roots. At the close of this first hour, I saw from one of the heights we traversed a ruin lying N.W. by N., and close at hand: the guides called it Chulleted-Dar. About ten minutes after, we made a short halt at the base of an isolated, flattened hillock, perhaps one hundred feet high, called Tell-Ziph, probably the acropolis of the ancient city of Ziph (Josh. xv. 55); while Robinson, passing this way on his journey to 'Ain-Jiddy, thought there was ground to believe the extensive ruins to the east of the Tell to be those of the city itself. I saw these ruins very distinctly from the top of the hillock, and heard my guides call them Um-el-nawâkîs (the mother of bells). They lie at the entrance of a wadi called wadi Nawâkîs, which runs down to the Dead Sea in the direction of east by south. Among the various places, the angles of which I measured from Tell-Ziph, there was Beni-nâ'im, which Robinson * identifies with Caphar Barucha (the city of blessing), where St Paula visited the place where Abraham stood before the Lord and looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain. Robinson thought that the remains of the city of Ziph gave evidence of its having been inha-

* Vol. ii. p. 189. Perhaps the same as Anim, Josh. xv. 50.

bited subsequently to the dominion of the Saracens. On the Tell of Ziph I found nothing but scattered hewn building-stones, two empty rain tanks, and a great quantity of ancient red-ribbed potsherds.

One cannot imagine a better point for commanding a view of David's wanderings in the wilderness. A panorama of the whole surrounding district is to be seen from it. No wonder, then, that the Ziphites saw David and his men passing to and fro in the mountains of the wilderness, and, spying him at a distance, when he ventured to shew himself on the hill of Hachilah, on the south side of Ziph ("on the right hand of the wilderness"*), sent to Saul in haste to tell him of the lurking-place of his enemy. Of the wood where Jonathan came to David, and "made a covenant with him before the Lord," nothing now remains. The country has for many centuries lost its woods and forests, owing to the devastations caused by man. When I thought of the treachery of the Ziphites, I could not repress a feeling of indignation; but, thought I, to what great lessons am I called here by the scene at my feet—lessons more important than that taught by the conduct of the inhabitants of this Tell! David, God's peculiar favourite, hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, is found out by his friend Jonathan, who renews his covenant with him before the Lord. Jonathan is alone, and finds him; Saul, on the contrary, comes with his select thousands, and prowls around within a short distance of his enemy, yet finds him not. David at last finds Saul as he lies asleep in his stronghold, but, taught by God's Spirit, he takes

* Sam. xxiii. 14, 19, 28, and xxvi. 1, &c.

no revenge for himself, leaving vengeance to Him who hath said, "I, the Lord, will repay."

2 Chron. xi. 18 informs us, that Ziph was fortified as a city of defence by Rehoboam. But the hill is now ploughed and sown, while its slopes have been laid out as terraces for hundreds of years.

Ziph is surrounded by extensive plains, nearly quite horizontal, and, to all appearance, admirably fitted for agriculture. Yet it was only here and there that I saw a spot cultivated; the rest lay waste and useless.

A full half hour beyond Ziph, in the direction southward, being that which we were now following, there lay some other ruins. Robinson could find no name for them, nor could De Saulcy, who returned along this track from his expedition to the Dead Sea. My guides called them el-Maje, and a heap of ruins, a half hour farther on, Um-el-amîd (the mother of columns), which also both the travellers just named observed. We now soon arrived at the ruins of Carmel (Josh. xv. 55), probably the most considerable of any in this whole district. Robinson copiously describes them. He found the ruins of large walls at the head of a ravine which runs down to the Dead Sea. Here there is a large pool, 117 feet long, and 74 broad, fed by a canal cut through the rock from a spring that gushed up at a short distance to the north-west. He further gives, as being a mile to the south of the still extant castle, a church, 156 feet long, and two smaller churches, the one to the east and the other to the west of the castle, both of which, however, can only be recognised as such by their foundations. The most important of all these ruins is the castle, which is

called by the natives Kasr-el-birkeh (the castle of the pool), while the whole mass of ruins, taken altogether, has retained in Kurmul the name of Carmel. In the large bevelled stones of this building Dr Robinson recognised the same architect as in those of the Hippicus-tower at Jerusalem, namely, Herod the Great; whilst the pointed arches inside the building betray the architecture of the Saracens. The walls of the castle are about 10 feet thick. The form of this fortress is quadrangular, with 62 feet for the longer, and 42 for the shorter sides.

Carmel suggests to us solemn reflections, as the site of the pillar which Saul erected when his heart was lifted up in consequence of his victory over the Amalekites,* and as the scene of the conduct of the hard-hearted and churlish Nabal, who refused to David and his men what, according to the custom of the country then, and also now, was every way a reasonable request,† a refusal for which the Lord punished him with death. A simple understanding of Scripture in this chapter seems to shew that David himself on that occasion was not at Carmel. Abigail repaired to him with his messengers, when he took her for his wife. "He also took Ahinoam of Jezreel" to be his wife. Jezreel I have been unable to identify, although I have no doubt of its having been situated between Carmel, Maon, and Juta.

How much I should have liked to sketch the castle of Carmel; but some insolent Bedouïns prevented me. They sat in the shade of the ruin, and had hardly set their eye on us, when they came to ask a baksheesh,

* Sam. xv. 12. † xxv. 2–42.

saying that this was their country, and that travellers behoved to pay them tribute. It spoke for itself that no farther baksheesh was due, after the large baksheesh paid to Abû Dahûk's agent. The rascals, for I make bold to call them such, would not indeed have made much of us, for our guides were as well armed as they; but annoyed by such a set of fellows it would never have been possible for me to take an accurate drawing of the ruin. Accordingly we proceeded on our way, and twenty minutes after leaving Carmel reached the Tell Ma'în, the hillock on which was situated the ancient Maon of Josh. xv. 55, Nabal's proper residence,* and from which the adjacent wilderness mentioned in 1 Sam. xxiii. 24 and 25 is called the wilderness of Maon. The mountain plateau seems here to end. It is true the summit ridge of the southern hills runs out a long way further towards the south-west, but towards the south-east the ground sinks more and more down to a table-land of a lower level, which in 1 Sam. xxiii. 24 is called "the plain to the right hand (to the south) of the wilderness." Since leaving Hebron we had constantly had the highest summits of our mountain plateau on our right. Here we quitted the hills altogether, and descended on the further side of Tell Ma'în, through a valley running many hundred feet down towards the south-east. From the heights one commands an extensive view of the whole tract of country to the south. The sky was particularly clear, and the furthest distant blue mountains that I saw in the south, lay already beyond the boundaries of the

* 1 Sam. xxv. 2.

land of Israel. Tell' Arad, a low isolated hill, I saw distinctly, at no great distance from us.

The valleys and the hills around me now presented a new aspect, and one on which the eye loved to repose. All was green; all clothed with young spring grass and spring flowers. There was something soft and lovely in the sight, which I had not for long enjoyed, accustomed as I had become to rocks and stones, among which there shoots up nothing but prickly plants and stunted oak shrubs. Nor was the grass here thin and scanty, but rather rich and heavy. And the meadow-flowers, how did they delight me! some by their similarity to those of our own country, and others, new to me, by their colours, fragrance, and forms. In many parts of it our valley was truly a pleasure-ground, where the (so-called) juniper bushes, with their leafless, slim, feathery stalks, were in full blossom. The small flower of this plant resembles that of a dwarf acacia, of a white and yellow colour, and hanging down in elegant clusters. The leaf is little more than a small green thread, much resembling that of the tamarisk, but not so thickly set round its slender stalk; it appears first after the blossom, and when fading perfumes the air with its balsamic odours. The Arabs call this plant *Retem*. Robinson says the translation of this name into juniper-tree is wrong.* A small murmuring rill, along which we pursued our way, made up whatever was wanting in the delicious amenity of this valley.

It is far from being the case, however, that these

* *Bible Researches*, vol. i. p. 299.

charms are retained throughout all seasons of the year. The grassy meadows of Palestine are in this respect very unlike those in our country. Our grass looks, indeed, fresh in spring, luxuriant in summer, and at the close of the year withered and yellowish; but still, under all circumstances, there is grass. In Palestine, on the contrary, the grass grows only so long as the ground that is adapted for it is moistened by the winter rains. The traveller who passes through these tracts in spring is ravished with the luxuriant vegetation, and the multitude of flowers; the whole country seems to say to him: See, now, and behold, are not we, hills and valleys, as the Scripture saith, a land flowing with milk and honey? But scarcely have the latter rains ceased, and the storms of the vernal equinox subsided, than an almost vertical sun withers up the grass and flowers, the scorching south-east winds come up from the wilderness, and the traveller who to-day has passed over a verdant and variegated carpet of herbage and flowers, will, three weeks after, at the same place, not meet with a single blade of grass: all vegetation he will then find scorched to death; and if during that interval the sirocco has been more than ordinarily powerful in its blast, then the grass, after being shrivelled into hay, will have been swept afar, and the surface of the ground will have assumed a dingy, yellowish copper colour.

Hence it is that travellers often give such totally opposite accounts of the same places. The different seasons, as they come round, make hills and villages, valleys and towns, wear totally different aspects.

Has this been so at all periods?

I believe it has not. No doubt there must always have been a great difference between the appearance of Palestine in spring and Palestine in harvest; but as the land, before it was stricken with God's curse, had much more water and wood than now, I cannot think that the aridity of the soil can then have reached such an extreme. It could have been only in particular occasions, such as that of the famine in the days of Jacob, and the drought in the times of Elijah and Jeremiah, that Palestine presented in the full meaning of the word a frightful spectacle. Jeremiah xiv. 1–6 gives us a striking representation of such a scene. With our eye upon these circumstances, one is also strongly impressed by the opposite picture, drawn in Scripture to illustrate the case of "the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. xvii. 7, 8.)

Only a few travellers have passed through this valley. I know of none but Zeetzen, Irby and Mangles, Bertou, Robinson and Smith, and of late De Saulcy, who came from the south, that is, from the opposite direction. Since the Crusades, the pilgrims in *Terra Sancta* seem not to have troubled themselves about these southern regions; I therefore noted with double attention the ruins to the right and to the left, lying against the heights along this valley; but although I recognised Jembeh, Kureytein,* el-Beyûdh (I heard

* I agree with Robinson in holding this to be the Kerioth of Josh. xv. 25.

it called Bûdjûd), el-Khuneifit, and et-Taiyib, mentioned by Robinson, yet my guides were not sufficiently acquainted with the localities to be able to furnish me with all the information I required. On the top of the huge rocky hill on the right hand, and which slowly sloped away in a south-west direction, I saw various other remains of walls and houses; but all that my guides knew about these ruins was, that they went under the collective name Um-el-abbar. I recommend them to the attention of future travellers.

After two hours' travelling from the time we left Ma' în, we came to a knoll in the valley, where we found ourselves all at once at a camp of the Jehalîn-Bedouïns (Abû Dahûk's tribe). Five-and-forty black goats'-hair tents were pitched in a circle, and our path led us close past them. The sight of those black tents startled me somewhat. I felt myself powerless in a land of robbers, and had they thought fit to attack and plunder me I had no means of preventing them. But I endeavoured to fix my soul upon my SHIELD in whom I trusted, and henceforward to familiarise myself with the sight of Bedouïns and Bedouïn tents. Our guides, in conformity with the practice of the country, kissed a few of those whose curiosity led them to stand and stare at us, and we passed on without any delay.

I found that Tell-'Arad lay at three hours' distance from Ma' în. Robinson passed at some distance from it, and was told by the Bedouïns who accompanied him that there were no ruins there. I knew not whether any travellers had ever gone up to it, and accordingly I made that tell a special object of examination. It had a narrow top which was covered with

a thick crop of tall grass. Building-stones were not to be seen, but I found some fragments of very ancient pottery, of which I put a few into my pocket, and on the south side of the knoll a large well or reservoir, the sides of which had long ago fallen in. Tell-'Arad seems for many a long year to have been uninhabited and unvisited. The knoll lies at the south end of the valley, from which we had descended into a wide extensive plain. Among other objects that here attracted my attention, was a ruin seen west-north-west from this point, on the slope of the hills. The guides called it Durreijat, or Drujat. Tell-'Arad, Robinson thinks, is the Harad of Joshua xii. 14, and Judges i. 16. It was the king of Arad, or Harad, who, when he heard that Israel came by the way of the spies, "fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners."* Israel must then have closely approached this district, coming probably as far as the ascent of the mountains, whereby one goes up to the wilderness, to the south of Tell-'Arad. How near to the promised land! And yet they had to make a long circuit, away back to the Red Sea, and to be detained behind Edom, a way that cost them many years' journeying, and those years full of trials, ere they passed through the waters of Jordan into the land of promise.

It was well that the weather was fine, and the way only moderately long; for otherwise we should with difficulty have reached the camp of Abû Dahûk before dark. It lay pitched at two hours' distance east-south-east of Tell-'Arad, in a basin formed by some green hills, known among the Bedouïns as Wadi er-Rmaïl.

* Numbers xxi. 1.

The way from the tell to this wadi ran over the broad, level, and now verdant plain, without any beaten path, but known only by keeping the eye on the low hills in the distance. On entering this group of hills we passed one more ruin, called Rûjûm-Selameh (the cairn of peace), which Robinson also mentions, but which he has placed by far too near Tell-'Arad. The distance between these two places is at least an hour and a quarter.

At the foot of the knolls of Wadi er-Rmaïl lay the camp of the Jehalîns. It was now about sunset, the time of day when the shepherds return home with their camels and flocks. I saw them coming down the sides of the hills to their tents, a truly rural and inviting scene, to which the bleating of the sheep added a liveliness that made this my first arrival among the dwellers in the wilderness at once cheerful and charming. We had already passed several small divisions of Abû Dahûk's camp; I thought there would be no end to this labyrinth. At last, upon turning round a hillock, we found ourselves unexpectedly in the midst of the principal group of the tents of the formidable shech.

Abû Dahûk had had word sent to him the day before by Shech Hamzeh of my coming, so that my appearance naturally excited no surprise. The shech stepped up with his long pipe and princely bearing as I dismounted, wearied with a ride of from eight to nine hours. He greeted me with a "mesikoum belcheir chawadja" welcome. M. de Saulcy had told me much about his friend Shech Dhaëf-Ouallah (according to Eli Smith, Defa'-allah), and that in a way which, in

spite of his high words, had given me the impression that Abû Dahûk had inspired him with no small measure of awe. "This shech," so he told me in Paris, "is a mighty person, and absolute lord over the greater part of the desert. His appearance is that of a man of sixty. He is nearly six feet high, and strong and muscular as a bull. His brown face is smiling; his cheeks plump; his nose aquiline; his mouth enormous. When he opens it, three or four teeth, as long as the keys of a piano, protrude at least half an inch. His voice is hoarse; his eyes bloodshot, and affected by ophthalmia. The costume of the desert monarch is shabby in the extreme. His cloak is threadbare; his under-garment no better; his turban scarcely retains any distinguishable colour; and his boots, originally red, are in a state of dilapidation painful to contemplate. I have renewed him these articles, but I doubt not if you supply him with a new suit it will be very acceptable, and you will thereby promote the success of your expedition."

My feelings with respect to the Bedouïns were, owing to the light I had received from better informed persons, and to the slight experience I myself had had among them, different from those of M. de Saulcy. I had been taught to make it a fixed rule to offer them no presents at the commencement of an expedition; should generosity impel you to distribute presents, do it at the end of your journey; for if you once begin, even although what you give may be mere trifles, they give you no peace during the whole subsequent period of your being with them.

Such had been my determination with respect to

Abû Dahûk. I was prepared on his coming up how to act. No coffee, sugar, tobacco, or clothes, had I brought for the Bedouïns. Not a weapon was there with me for my own defence. I had only taken the precaution of sending all I possessed of any value, in papers, &c., for preservation to Jerusalem, and my travelling equipage was confined, accordingly, to articles that were quite indispensable.

Abû Dahûk began with the usual profusion of Bedouïn civilities. Not only was I particularly welcome among them, but he and his whole tribe, with all that they possessed, were from that moment my property. I had only to say the word: my command would be an obligation.

Hollow and utterly worthless mendacity, unless indeed as a covering for the concealment of their thievish propensities, by which, too, they make an empty show of exercising the ancient patriarchal hospitality.

But, poor Bedouïns, how should they come to have any love for truth? The truth is hid from them. No man as yet had possessed enough of love for sinners, together with adequate physical powers, to trust his life among them as a messenger of the truth.

My tent was speedily pitched at a distance of fifty paces from that of the shech. He issued strict orders that my property should be respected, and three or four Bedouïns were appointed to guard my tent. I took the freedom, nevertheless, to enjoin redoubled vigilance on the part of my own people, being well aware that the thievish disposition of the Bedouïns might not be so wholly repressed as that they might not pilfer, were a chance afforded them, some small

articles of Ferez's cooking establishment, or even something from underneath the sides of the tent. Hardly, too, had the tent been pitched when the Bedouïns came swarming about me like bees; the space outside was crowded with them, and such as thought themselves of a little more consequence than the rest followed Abû Dahûk within, to be present at the audience with which, willing or unwilling, I had to favour him.

It was a memorable evening. The Bedouïns, indeed, were troublesome, and that, too, to the last degree; but besides the novelty of the whole affair there was something of peculiar interest in my position, which I hardly know how to express. Helpless and unarmed was I in the camp of a band of people who subsist by roving about as thieves and robbers. By my side in the tent sat the chief of these bandits, the unsightly Abû Dahûk, the feared among the feared, restrained neither by gifts nor by weapons, but by a mightier Arm than his.

As Abû Dahûk still perfectly recollected his reception by M. de Saulcy, he must have found it difficult to know what to think of that which he had from me. From the former he had received demonstrations of respect shewn in presents, coffee and pipes—in my tent a polite, but cold enough reception, indicating the utmost possible indifference as to the shech's Bedouïn authority as it respected me, while at the same time I shewed my utmost possible appreciation of his dignity as a man. In my whole conduct towards Abû Dahûk I made it a point of consequence to treat him according to strict etiquette, but at the same time to let him see that I expected him to respect etiquette

in his conduct towards me. I endeavoured to be friendly as far as possible, and to wear likewise a particularly careless and light-hearted expression, as if perfectly at my ease as to the shech's loyal and friendly disposition. But if Abû Dahûk went a step too far in the liberties he took—for example, if he asked for tobacco to fill his pipe, or for more sugar in his coffee, —then I made a passing remark to him, through Philip, as if I thought that such childish demands were unbecoming, that they betrayed in him the beggarly disposition of the Bedouïns, and were apt to lower my opinion of him. Did he ask for this or that article for the use of his wife and children, the answer was, that it was unmannerly to make such requests, and that I had not provided myself with any presents, having been unwilling to believe the reports that the Bedouïns were for ever plaguing travellers for presents. And so with respect to all else. That I watched the effect of such hints, and that not without a certain satisfaction, you may readily believe.

Abû Dahûk on his side gave a glance at me sometimes, with a pair of eyes that seemed to say, that never in the world had he met with such an extraordinary creature. And this wonder was only increased by the laugh which those looks drew from me.

He had sat for some time, had smoked several pipes, and drank several cups of coffee, had put some insignificant questions, and had inspected almost every object in the tent, when at last he broached the grand subject of the day—our contract!

"Ya ibni!" (hear me, my little son)—so he began, addressing himself to Philip, "say to your master, that

the sum of money for which he contracted with Shech Hamzeh, acting in my name, for an escort to the Dead Sea and the wilderness, is far too little. It must be made at least thrice as much."

The answer was, that Shech Abû Dahûk was an honourable man, and chief of the Jehalîns, who could not break his word, and thus it was needless to say anything farther on the subject. I could not be supposed to insult Abû Dahûk by supposing him to be a robber who would break his word, after the half of the sum agreed upon had been paid to Shech Hamzeh.

"Who is Shech Hamzeh? I know no Shech Hamzeh."

"Shech Hamzeh is your agent, and he negotiated for you with me. He was under no compulsion, but acted with entire freedom. You also very well know that the contract was concluded with, or in presence of, the Governor of Hebron, in pursuance of a special firman of the Sultan, and accordingly that the whole responsibility rests on him and you."

A cloud came over the face of the shech. He bit his lip with his long tusks. He saw that at the present moment he could not do more, and thought it the wiser course to contrive some other plan of attack. For the remainder of the evening I was rid of him, but not of the rabble he had brought with him. A large circle of people remained around my tent while Ferez killed and broiled a kid, and one of the Bedouïns, a bard such as is never wanting in a camp, gratified the crowd with his improvised verses and unmusical scraping on a Bedouïn fiddle. As far as Philip's translations went, the talents of the bard transcended my

capacity to understand him, and I could not find the key to the sense that made the whole company burst into such constant fits of laughter. What would I not willingly have given to be able to sketch for you the whole group! but fatigue, and the entering of memoranda in my note-book, prevented me.

You may see from all this, that a life in one's own tent, with all its superiority to lodgings in the houses of others, yet does not secure that freedom which we naturally associate with it. Not at least when the tent is pitched in the midst of a Bedouïn camp. One is then much in the condition of a person sleeping within gauze mosquito curtains. He is well protected from the stings of the little troublesome insects, but not from their annoying din, as they dance around him looking for some opening by which they may penetrate within. This is what I have experienced to-day. I had proposed to myself, that in spite of whatever unpleasantness it might cost me, I should not travel on the Lord's Day, and should rather remain with my tent in the midst of the Bedouïns. Yet of rest have I hardly had any, except for a short interval after I had explained that Christians, when they pray, seek to be alone, and not like the Moslems surrounded by many spectators. The poor Bedouïns, although nominally attached to the Mohammedan faith, can hardly be said to have any religion at all. They seemed, nevertheless, to understand me when I besought them to leave me alone with my Bible.

In the afternoon they seemed to think they were free to do as they pleased. My tent was completely besieged. Even the wives of the Bedouïns—no beau-

ties, but robust coarse Amazons—could no longer resist the temptation. They must forsooth come into the tent, and have their share in the common begging. Some of the Bedouïns, too, came to request medical aid. Among these there were several who had received severe gunshot wounds. How had they come by these? Never ask a Bedouïn that question. He is ever fighting, and ever fought with. He plunders, or is plundered; he assaults not only travellers, but his own fellow-Bedouïns also, who happen to belong to a different tribe. "His hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against him." * For these wounds I had nothing to recommend but the actual cautery, but the poor sufferers had no liking for that, although they had been languishing for weeks, and had no prospect of a speedy cure. A brother of Abû Dahûk's was one of these. Of nothing—as I have already remarked—have the inhabitants of these countries so much need as of medical help. Should I ever have to travel in the East again, I must previously fit myself for imparting such aid. It is an open door for much good, physical, moral, and spiritual; a beaten road to many hearts. No Bedouïn will ever plunder a Hakîm.

Abû Dahûk made last night another attempt to extort from me some hundred piastres more. On this occasion he tried to make use of Peter to frighten me. The poor youth was taken aside by him, and came to tell me that the shech was in the highest degree dissatisfied on account of the small sum for which Hamzeh contracted. He would not risk the lives of his Bedouïns for a handful of piastres, and that risk

* Genesis xvi. 12.

would be incurred should they accompany me; for we must traverse districts which are the haunts of Bedouïns of another tribe, with which Abû Dahûk is at war. He even dropped hints that he would not allow me to proceed without having first complied with his demands. Should he think good to detain me as a captive, and refuse to release me except on payment of an enormous ransom, what is there to hinder him?

Thus has the "king of the wilderness" betaken himself at last to threats. And Peter, who lately shewed such courage, now begins to be afraid. No need for that, my lad! You set me lately too good an example with your Bedouïns, for me to allow myself to be discouraged by the idle threats of such a coarse bandit.

"But what answer must I then give to Abû Dahûk?" —Peter asked me.

"Not a single word."

In the course of the day I had the shech but once in my tent. The old affair was not touched upon; but his countenance had none of the friendly look mentioned by M. de Saulcy. Finally, in the evening he came back, and having sufficiently fortified his spirits for the effort with coffee and tobacco, he began to disburden himself.

"Mesikoum belcheir chawadja!" (a blessed evening, sir)—the usual introduction to a new subject in the conversation of the Arabs.

"Mesikoum belcheir Abû Dahûk!"

After this there followed once more the assurance that the sum agreed on was too small, with the addition that, as shech, he was without the power to send

out his Bedouïns for so trifling a remuneration on so perilous an expedition.

His statement was well enough expressed, was full of gesticulations, and accompanied with an intonation of voice so suited to the reasons he urged, so condescending and so persuasive, that one might have supposed him to have studied the art of speaking at one of our university schools.

And my answer?

That remained to be given.

The shech gave me an inquiring look. I met his eye with an expression of the utmost possible indifference.

"Well now," said he to Philip, "ask your master what his answer is."

"I told the shech yesterday evening all on that point that I had to say to him. To repeat it all over again to him now, would be to insult him."

"Hm!" he rejoined, and once more looked at me, while I once more endeavoured to meet his scrutinising glance with ceremonious coolness. With that I broke off the conversation, and he, tired with the contest about the piastres, shortly afterwards, not very politely, laid himself down beside me all his length. He is now sound asleep. The other Bedouïns seem unwilling to disturb him, and thus I have been fortunate enough to find time to tell you all about my meeting with this robber-tribe. What unnerves me more than Abû Dahûk's threats, is a sirocco that has been blowing the whole day, and makes its debilitating influence severely felt. The atmosphere was dry, and scorching to the

last degree. Happily the wind has not been high, so that it has not thrown down the tent, but when you figure to yourself the severity of the cold at Hebron only the day before yesterday, and the scorching heat to-day in Wadi er-Rmaïl, you will not wonder at the influence of a change so great and so sudden. I have to arm myself with patience, however, seeing that ere long I must be in a warmer temperature still.

BESIDE THE WELLS OF 'AR' ÂRAH (AROER),
31*st March*.

Thanks be to God, I sit here, quiet and undisturbed, on the carpeting of grass, under the shadow of my tent. A difficult part of my journey has been accomplished safely and well. True, it has been beyond measure fatiguing. But it is now over, and I made the stage short to-day, in order that I might be able to pitch my tent betimes, and so procure for myself and my people the requisite rest, and have time besides for communicating to you all the principal things I have seen and experienced since I became the guest of Abû Dahûk.

That I was not much at my ease, notwithstanding the expression of indifference, and the smiles that I shewed to Abû Dahûk, will not surprise you. No doubt I knew in whom I trusted, but the exercise of faith is never without a conflict, even after the greatest victory. I need not tell you that I cast myself with renewed earnestness on my Lord and Saviour, ere the approaching dawn had disturbed the sleep of the Bedouïn camp. After that I found myself strengthened, and my prayers have hitherto been answered in a remarkable manner.

After snatching a hasty breakfast I had the animals laden and saddled. All was ready to start, the mukhari and his mules at their post, but Abû Dahûk was awanting.

I had him sent for, and with the utmost composure asked for the guides for which I had contracted and partly paid. He replied that he had already told me that the sum was too small, and that he would not let me proceed until I complied with his request to have five hundred piastres added.

"What I have then to say," I rejoined, "is this—Your agent contracted with me in the presence of the Metzellim at Hebron, and he has already received the half of the sum to be paid. Notwithstanding this, yesterday, and the day before yesterday, you have tried and threatened to extort more from me. That is contrary to law: that is not what a man of a proper spirit would do, and what, in the face of the authorities of the country, you cannot do, be your position as shech of this Bedouïn tribe ever so independent. Would you now venture to make the attempt, do then what you think fit, let me return to Hebron without accomplishing my object, or make me a prisoner, plunder me, do what you please; but know well what you are bringing down upon your own head. This is all I have to say."

The shech muttered something between his teeth, which I did not understand, and stood for a moment looking round him. No wonder; no wolf will willingly let his prey escape.

"Abû Dahûk," I said once more, "I have no time to lose."

"Promise then a baksheesh, when you shall have accomplished your journey," said he.

"I promise nothing."

"J'allah!" he exclaimed (come on, in God's name), "wait here a moment; I will see to your having guides."

Up to the last moment he had persisted in his purpose. But I too had done the same, and my Helper gave me the victory. A few minutes afterwards the shech appeared with four wretched Bedouïns, more wretched, perhaps, than any others in the whole camp. They had hardly clothes to cover their nakedness. Each had an old matchlock slung across his back, but more for show than use. Two of these were to acccompany me as far as Masada, and were then to return; the remainder of the journey I was to perform with the two others.

This was not the defensive escort that I bargained for.

"Abû Dahûk," I said, "you know it well, your head is for mine."

"El-rasi," he rejoined (my head is your warrant), giving me the assurance besides that our journey lay wholly beyond reach of the tribe that was at war with him, and thus all armed defence was unnecessary.

Assuredly I had full right to refuse this paltry escort, as at variance with the contract; but there was no saying how long a contest with Abû Dahûk would have detained me, and on the other hand, thought I, it is better for me to reckon on the protecting hand of God alone, than on a few more armed Bedouïns. That Abû Dahûk in person was to remain at home I knew beforehand; spoiled as he had been by other travellers, he was not to be induced for a few hundred

piastres to undertake a journey of eight days. But to be delivered from the annoyance of his company was far more welcome to me than disappointing. This remark only can I not withhold: if a numerous escort be unnecessary, what tricks and artifices the Bedouïn shechs employ to extort money from travellers. Insatiable vultures they truly are, ever the more intent on plunder the better the success they see attending their deceptions. Travellers will rather be content to be plundered in this way than have so much ado about a matter of a few pounds sterling. Yes, but all at the cost and to the annoyance of those who come after them, and who at every turn have more and more extorted from them. Plagued and harassed by these wretches, almost all travellers execrate and condemn them; but who are most in fault, the travellers or the Bedouïns? I feel convinced, that with a little calm firmness, the golden days of the Bedouïn escorts would soon be at an end, and that those tracts of Palestine, that are now rendered so unsafe by their tribes, would be more visited by travellers — perhaps as a commencement of the better days that are ordained for this country.

About half-past two we were at length ready to start. Abû Dahûk's countenance cleared up. He accompanied me for some distance on foot, and after exchanging "ma Salamehs," returned to the camp.

Forward, therefore, we advanced into that desert tract where the Bedouïns have made their name so dreaded. What a small and helpless body was our caravan! We ourselves were five, and none of us had any weapon but Peter; and the four poor creatures of Bedouïns went along with us, armed with matchlocks

incapable of hurting anybody. The object now was to go to Masada, or, as the Bedouïns call it, Sebbeh, lying in a direction east-north-east of Abû Dahûk's camp. The whole district here is nothing but a bare arid wilderness, an endless succession of yellow and ash-coloured rocks, without grass or shrubs, quite uninhabited, without water, and almost without life. Reckoning from Wadi er-Rmaïl to the Dead Sea, the scene is ever the wilder and more desolate the further you advance. For the first hour we were in an undulating plain, broken only here and there with hillocks. Various wadis, such as Wadi 'Amra, Nahr Maleh, Wadi Urne, and Wadi Bgiëh, have their beginnings here, and all run down in a south-eastern direction towards the Dead Sea. The further to the east the steeper they become, and the more do those frightful effects of Nature's forces reveal themselves, which have cleft the hills into such horror-awakening rents and chasms.

We now travelled round a remarkable table-mountain, called Jebel-Aráâm, and found shortly afterwards, in the hollows between the cliffs of a ravine, some water that had been left there by the winter rains. I do not think, however, that the heavy rain that lately fell at Hebron could have extended so far as this, for we should have seen the traces of it. Ruins I have observed nowhere, and my guides, too, assured me that there were none in this part of the wilderness. Only a burying-ground of the Bedouïns was pointed out to me, marked by some regular heaps of stones, on the flat top of a hillock, about two hours to the north-east of Abû Dahûk's camp. It proved to me

that how desolate soever the district might be, the Bedouïn occasionally roams over it, and makes it his temporary home.

Our guides turned out well. Their roving propensity nevertheless did not belie itself, for instead of going straight on as we did, they went off to the left and right like bloodhounds, without any conceivable reason for their doing so, except their own peculiar habits; for, as they themselves said, there was no reason to apprehend danger. But the Bedouïn is always seeing something, though nobody else may see it,—a bird, some game, or whatever else it may happen to be. Thus for example, one of these guides came to me unexpectedly with half-a-score of partridges' eggs, which he had discovered under some solitary bush. When I asked him if there were partridges on these dry hills, he replied, "Ketir" (many)—although I had not seen one as yet. The present of the partridges' eggs, meanwhile, gave him an occasion for returning to the favourite theme of baksheesh; and soon a storm of requests for baksheesh followed from all the four Bedouïns at once. Happily I got rid of this harassing importunity, by telling them that if they conducted themselves well a baksheesh was not impossible at the end of the journey; but that the first who allowed the word baksheesh to pass his lips, should positively have none at all. This disposed of the matter: not one of them annoyed me for a moment longer.

After three hours' travelling, in passing over a height, the Dead Sea and the ruins of Masada burst suddenly on my view. The prospect was indescribably stern and desolate, but at the same time sublime. The fan-

tastic forms of the rocks on the foreground, a medley of gray limestones, yellowish gravel, and brown fragments of lava, here piled up in perpendicular cliffs, there laid one above another in flat strata, and yonder rent asunder into frightful chasms; between these a plain covered with a number of small conical hills, white, gray, and yellow, all the produce or the effect of subterranean fire; somewhat further off, the almost perpendicular rocks of Masada; and away over them again, the bright blue mirror of the Dead Sea, with the pearly gray mountains of Moab—cannot you imagine the magnificence of the sight? Well, then I have tried to preserve for you some idea of it by means of a faithful sketch.

We had still half an hour to travel from this, before we arrived at the foot of Masada's rocks. A wadi here runs down along the hilly ground to the Dead Sea, which had still some water remaining in the hollows of the rocks. M. de Saulcy and his companions came here last year (10th January), from 'Ain Jiddy, and pitched their camp for the night, without, however, being fortunate enough to find water. We refreshed ourselves with the liquid, although it was greenish, and had creeping worms in it; but water in these arid regions always has its value, however bad it may be. After this I began, together with Philip and one of the Bedouïns, to clamber up the rocks, while the rest of our small caravan sought shelter from the heat in the shade of the high cliffs.

Masada has only been visited by a few travellers. Robinson and Smith saw it from Engedi, in the distance. Wolcott and Tipping climbed to its almost

inaccessible summit in 1842 (February), and gave an ample account of their expedition in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. The rock was ascended afterwards, in 1848, by Mr Dales, Dr Anderson, and Mr Bedlow, of the American expedition under command of Lieutenant Lynch; and last year by M. de Saulcy and some of his fellow-travellers, while to-day it has fallen to my lot to do so. My predecessors have all communicated, some more, some less, of the historical particulars that Josephus has recorded with regard to this place. Our own zealous Dapper, too, has copiously expatiated on Masada, and thus I am saved the trouble of once more inserting these details in my letter. Josephus, with his usual exaggeration, gives such a picture of Masada and the perilous rocky pathway by which the fortress must be ascended, as is enough to make one's hair stand on end. M. de Saulcy, whose lively imagination readily accepts and follows the representation given by Josephus, adds, moreover, a few touches of his own composition, which make even the fiery colours of the Jewish historian grow pale. "After some minutes' progress, the path becomes more difficult, and goats alone might be content with it, supposing they were not over-difficult to please. There can be no doubt we are moving on the perilous ledge called by Josephus 'the Snake;' but I avouch, and my companions will scarcely gainsay me, that the historian of the Jews has described it in too flattering colours. It is one continual scaling-ladder, several hundred feet in perpendicular height, which increase when we think they are exhausted. If you venture a glance to the left, while on this picturesque ascent,

beware of the vertigo, and a bottomless abyss which threatens you with a kind of fatal fascination. We determine, therefore, to look only to the right as we go up; going down we shall have the variety of looking to the left, which will be some consolation."* Since the excursion among the rocks in the gorge of the Leontes, I had never encountered so formidable an undertaking in this country. Previous experience had led me to put a bottle of eau-de-cologne in my pocket, and I was thereby preserved from a fall that would infallibly have killed me. Not that the steepness of the rocks made me dizzy, but the glowing heat that radiated from them, and which became more and more overpowering the more the body was heated by the extraordinary exertion, produced faintness and giddiness. The stones, along which, here and there, I had to drag myself up with hands and feet, had become quite hot under the rays of the sun, and but for the reviving powers of that refreshing cordial I should certainly have fainted under the intolerable heat, and been precipitated to the bottom. I felt the faintness coming on, but was revived and preserved by the eau-de-cologne.

I spent fully two hours among the ruins. This was a long visit, and yet too short by much for an examination in detail of the broad platform on which Jonathan the high-priest built Masada, and which was by Herod the Great surrounded by a wall of the circumference of seven stadia, ten yards high, eight thick, and furnished with twenty-seven towers, fifty yards

* *Voyage à la Mer Morte*, &c., 1850–1851, par M. de Saulcy, 2 vols. Paris, 1853. (English ed. vol. i. p. 226.)

high. I stood wondering at the mind which could have conceived the idea of constructing a fortress on this isolated rock that rises perpendicularly to a height of a thousand feet above the Dead Sea. And such a fortress! provided not only with a palace and towers, with rain-tanks and subterranean magazines, but even with a layer of soil, on which, in case of need, a besieged force might raise their own grain! Nevertheless, what is there built by man that is not subject to destruction? Masada's houses and palaces lie prostrate, the rain-tanks are destroyed, the fortified wall is broken down. It fell, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, into the hands of a band of robbers, who nestled there for some time under their leader Eleazar; but, shut in by the army of Flavius Silva, the stones of whose entrenchments are still to be seen at the foot of the rock, and look as if they had been left there yesterday, they put each other to death, to the number of 960, while the last man made away with himself. A woman who had concealed herself with her children in a cave was the sole survivor of this frightful massacre.

It seems not known that Masada was ever after inhabited. Yet I surmise that it must have been so, from the evident remains of a small church, with a round chancel turned to the east, just as is the case with the Christian churches met with everywhere else in Palestine. I am surprised that neither Wolcott nor De Saulcy observed it. On the other hand they saw here and there Greek figures engraved on the wall. Are these, too, not of a later date than the siege by Silva? Subsequent travellers will perhaps be able to expiscate this.

This much, however, is certain, that Masada has now remained for many centuries waste and uninhabited. This fact is placed beyond all question by the wonderful state of preservation in which articles of Roman pottery are found there. The lovers of antiquities will nowhere find in all Palestine such beautiful red, ribbed potsherds, and such well preserved cubes of mosaic pavement, as on the summit of the rock of Masada.

The angles of this point, with the great peninsula that projects from the Moabite side into the southern part of the Dead Sea, were measured, and the difficult descent by the same (being the only) path by which we ascended, was accomplished. It was now three o'clock, and two of our Bedouïns went back to their camp, while we prepared for travelling through to es-Zuweirah. It was one of the principal objects I contemplated in this expedition to visit es-Zuweirah, and the salt-hill of Usdûm, where M. de Saulcy thought he had discovered the sites and the ruins of Zoar and of Sodom. The journey of Dr Robinson and E. Smith, in connexion with all that is recorded in Holy Scripture, had given me ground for the belief that M. de Saulcy was mistaken; but now, by personal investigation, I hoped to arrive at certainty regarding the matter.

Meanwhile, the distance from Masada to Zuweirah was too great to be accomplished in that same day. Consequently it occurred to us that we should endeavour to find a place where there was water, and the Bedouïns assured me that not a single drop of drinkable water was to be found along the shore-road of the Dead Sea between the two places, but that if we would

return some way among the hills we should probably reach a ravine, lying to the south-west of Masada, where they knew that the water of the winter rains was long of disappearing. It was a fatiguing and circuitous way of going to Zuweirah, but there remained no further choice. Four long and weary hours did we advance through the bare and lonely wilderness,—hours of stifling heat, grievous bodily exhaustion, and intolerable thirst, a thirst rendered all the more painful as it was a matter of doubt whether we should that evening find a single drop of water to cool the swollen tongue. Notwithstanding, while there was much effort required, there was much that was important and interesting by the way. For example, the unusual direction of our course, and the volcanic formation of those desert hills; here and there a plain, through which the dry bed of a stream wound its way, and where flowers, grass, and shrubs, shewed how well fitted even these arid places were for the growth of plants, were they but supplied with moisture. In such places we found the long prickly mimosa, with its beautiful yellow tiny flowerets, and its wholesome gum-drops, adhering in congealed lumps to its riven stem; the wild sorrel, whose astringent leaves are an excellent remedy for thirst; further, the wild rye, many sorts of camomile, slender heathy grass, and a dark green plant, which I had often met with in the plains of South Africa, and from which I remember the farmers made soap. Were I a botanist I could give you the names of a number of flowers and plants found in this district, which we have no opportunity of ever seeing in our country; but ignorant as I am of that use-

ful and pleasing science, I must content myself with saying that their colours, forms, smell, and variety, gave me much gratification. The prophecies as to the wilderness being converted into fruitful and lovely tracts, such as those in Isaiah xli. 8 and 19; xliii. 19, 20, and li. 3, came into my mind, and I secretly wished that those who understand those passages of Scripture, not in a literal, but only in a figurative sense, had been here with me, in order to see how easily the Lord could fulfil His word, by merely sending streams of water through these districts.

Those spots in the wilderness are a blessing and refreshment to men and beasts. The lark still blithely fluttered in the sky when the sun was near its setting; the partridges hardly went out of our way, so little are they used to being disturbed in their tranquil haunts; and from the ash-heaps, and the camel dung here and there to be seen, I could perceive that the Bedouïns encamped here during winter, as long as water was to be found for their flocks.

It was already dark when we pitched the tent on such a plain. One of the Bedouïns who had run on before from some distance greeted our ears with the joyful cry, "Fîh moy!" (here is water!) just at the place where he had said that he would be able to find it down in the valley. There, then, we passed the night, the quietest and the pleasantest that I had yet passed on this journey. Nothing disturbed us; the whole world seemed to be our own; the most complete stillness prevailed all around us; the heat of the day was over, no chill night air stiffened our limbs, for in those regions the temperature remains warm through

the night, just as within the tropics; and what was to me delightful above all things, no troublesome Bedouïns or inquisitive villagers came to besiege me in my tent. Once more, I have nowhere spent so agreeable a night as in these mountains bordering on the Dead Sea. Even our two Bedouïns felt blithe and happy. A few minutes sufficed for preparing their supper of fresh-made bread. The poor dweller in the wilderness carries a piece of sheepskin on his back, gathered together into a bundle. In that he keeps his meal, his salt, and a few lumps of dried milk-curds. When he halts for the evening he opens his sheepskin, lays it down with a hollow in the middle, kneads his dough in it, kindles a fire of twigs on the ground, and bakes his simple flat cake on the glowing embers, while his curds, soaked in water in his sheepskin dish, make up for the want of his favourite sour milk, now out of reach.

During the night the Lord watched over us. Refreshed and re-invigorated, we were again on the road at five next morning. A long day's journey lay before us; and truly it was the severest I have ever yet made. For the first hour and a half we rode through a hilly tract, quite like that of yesterday evening: now through plains, gravelly flats, dry water-courses edged with green, then through dusky-coloured or gray valleys, then again over broken hillocks. At times our footsteps gave such a hollow sound that I do not doubt for a moment we travelled over the crust of an abyss. Nowhere had I ever seen the volcanic formation so plainly as here. If any one has still a doubt that this whole district is undermined by craters and

fire passages, let him only come and spend a night here. The sulphureous vapour with which the atmosphere is filled, will soon convince him of it. Such articles of silver as we had with us, as a watch, &c., were found in the morning quite black.

After more than two hours' travelling we found ourselves on the edge of a frightful precipice. This was the crater of Zuweirah, one of the wildest scenes the eye can behold in the whole world. Perpendicular walls of rock, yellow, gray, and white, a medley of soft chalk or calcareous earth, with all sorts of volcanic substances intermingled, are heaped up, one above another, all round the abyss. Many hundred, perhaps more than a thousand feet of descent into the gulf below, the eye surveys and lights on something placed on an isolated rock, and that looks like a small ruin. That is Zuweirah, the remains of an insignificant fortress of Saracenic construction, built on a soft chalk rock a hundred and fifty feet in height, inclosed on all sides by high, naked, sharply angled walls of rock, which so entirely conceal it that it is visible nowhere but from the frightful elevation on which we now stood. I paused for some time, gazing in mute wonder at these impervious and inaccessible rocks. However wild and stern the desolation which such scenes may present elsewhere, they still have something—here and there a shrub, a fern, a tuft of moss, or a patch of grass above the tall towering cliffs—to refresh the eye; but these crater walls are completely naked, dry and dead, and their pointed rocks, gradually worn by the rains into sharp crests, have something so indescribably fearful

about them, that your heart involuntarily shrinks from the sight of so savage and inhuman a scene.

An extinct crater—yes, that the abyss of Zuweirah certainly is; but to look for Zoar here, the city Zoar, "the little," visible from the plain on which Sodom stood—no, impossible. Whatever the apparent similarity of the two names* may seem to indicate, such never *could have been* the site of Zoar. The present ruin, it is clear, could never have been more than a fortress of a very inferior description. I should never even think of calling it a fortress; it is merely a fortified building. And I believe I should not be far from the truth were I to suppose that es-Zuweirah was once a stronghold in which the marauding bands, which, as is well known, have for ages maintained themselves in these regions, were wont to nestle. I was still further confirmed in this idea by the small quantity of water which I found in a natural stone basin, close beside the fortified rock. No great number of men, not even a hundred, could have long maintained themselves here, owing to the want of water. How M. de Saulcy and his fellow-travellers should, in their eager desire to make discoveries, have allowed themselves to be so misled as to fancy that this could ever have been the site of a city, is what I can scarcely comprehend. Moreover, as regards Zoar, it is a still grosser mistake to look for it *here*. The travels of Irby and Mangles, De Bertou, Robinson and

* Dr Eli Smith, the best authority for Arabic names, assured me that the Hebrew *Zoar* has not the slightest affinity with the Arabic *es-Zuweirah*. Robinson had previously made the same remark.

Smith, and, not long ago, of the American investigators under the command of Lieutenant Lynch, *might* have sufficiently convinced that gentleman; while the Scriptures, too, shew in the clearest manner that Zoar did not lie here, but on the Moabitish or east side of the Dead Sea.* That Zoar belonged to Moab, M. de Saulcy well knew, but he has rid himself of the difficulty by bringing over the limits of Moab to the western side of the Dead Sea, silencing thereby at the same time the statements of Jerome and Ptolemæus.† The hypotheses and pseudo-discoveries of M. de Saulcy are all founded on his imaginary discovery of Sodom at the north-east base of the Salt mountain, the Jebel Usdûm of the Arabs. I shall presently bring you to that locality, and we shall then follow the French travellers a little more closely. First, we shall halt and breakfast in the shade of the rock of Zuweirah, while the mukhari with one of the Bedouïns goes to water the horses and mules. It is yet early, but at the same time this is the last place today where we shall find water. . . . .

You have heard and read, I doubt not, of the oppressive heat at the shores of the Dead Sea, a heat caused not so much by the tropical temperature of the atmosphere, but more especially by its condensed nature, as this basin lies more than 1300 feet below the level of the sea. Of course, I was acquainted with these circumstances, and was so impressed with them that I descended with a feeling of horror the precipitous path which leads to the crater of Zuweirah. Notwithstanding, I found the heat much less than I had

* Gen. xix. 30–38; Isa. xv. 5; Jer. xlviii. 34.

† De Saulcy, *Journey round the Dead Sea*, &c. vol. i. p. 436.

anticipated. True, the heat was great, and the air heavy, which occasioned a feeling of languor; but whether it was that a cool southern breeze blew the whole day, or that they represented the thing rather too unfavourably, I found the atmosphere of the Dead Sea quite bearable, in spite of the thirst from which I suffered the whole day.

We rested an hour at Zuweirah. After that we advanced with new courage, provided with a leathern water-bag, filled with that precious liquid, which when kept in such goat-skin bottles is very cool and agreeable. Zuweirah is separated from a plain on the south-west shore of the Dead Sea by a gorge of white and yellowish limestone rocks, called Wadi Zuweirah. Under the action of rain these rocks have assumed most fantastic shapes, as the soft substance easily gives way, and leaves on the perpendicularly broken sides the different horizontal and slanting strata visible. A vivid imagination has difficulty in convincing itself that these layers of stone and lime have not been built by the hand of man, and that Nature herself has alone been at work here. I thought of M. de Saulcy and his imaginary ruins. I must acknowledge that one is easily led to see in these rocks the ruins of towns and villages. It is through this gorge that the rain-water collected from the sides of the mountains in the crater of Zuweirah finds its way to the Dead Sea. The traces of this are everywhere visible, especially in the vegetation with which the bottom of the ravine is covered. Amongst the different shrubs and plants proper to this region, the thorny mimosa and the "sidr" are most abundant. The "sidr" is a tree

much like the mimosa, but with a smaller thorn and a larger leaf. Its fruit, called by the Bedouïns "doom," is a hard and acid berry of a yellow colour, with a fine tinge of red. Only when the berry has a shrivelled-up appearance, and is thus known to be dry, is it eatable; it has then a pleasant sweetish taste. They say that the "doom" is very nourishing, but, at the same time, causing great thirst,—a warning not to indulge too much in it.

For half an hour the Wadi Zuweirah winds along; it then ends in a plain about three-quarters of an hour in breadth from the entrance of the valley to the shore of the Dead Sea. Towards the north side the plain grows gradually more narrow, until it ends in the sea-shore, while on the south side it is immediately shut in by the mountains, of which the nearest to the sea is the Salt Mountain, a ridge extending for about ten miles, and reaching an elevation of from 200 to 300 feet. It is entirely composed of rock salt, covered only by a very thin layer of clay and lime. Entering the plain from the Wadi Zuweirah one sees that the Salt Mountain does not stand altogether isolated, but is connected with the main chain by a peninsula of rocks, whilst on the north side it projects into the plain. The plain exhibits an extent of gravel, chiefly of a gray colour, diversified occasionally by rows of large stones, which generally run parallel to each other. Between these rows of stones grow various shrubs, such as are proper to this locality, especially one kind which bears a great resemblance to the tamarisk, but which on closer examination indicates a different botanical affinity. M. de Saulcy crossed this plain twice, once from

north to south along the sea-shore, and afterwards from the north corner of the Salt Mountain to the Wadi Zuweirah. Here he gets quite excited. Without doubt this is the plain of Sodom, and the rows of stones are the remains of the city walls, and who knows what more! How little observation, thought I, is necessary, to recognise, in these rows of stones among the gravel and in the rich vegetation, the course of torrents which in the winter time sweep down from the mountain gorges and overflow the plain! Nothing is clearer than this. Any one who has ever seen the dry course of a river in the desert has no difficulty in here tracing the different beds of the numerous streams which during the rainy season wind through this plain. But what will not imagination do?

We followed in the footsteps of M. de Saulcy to Jebel Usdûm. Accidentally we were kept for a considerable time on the north side of this mountain. One of our Bedouïns, who knew well that we should have that day a very long journey, being ill, and so not feeling himself in a condition to accomplish it, attempted to conduct us by the east side of the Salt Mountain. At first I did not see through his design; but, as we came nearer to the mountain and began to have it on our left, his object could be no longer hid. My guides now swore with all sorts of oaths that there was no way to the west of the Salt Mountain; but you may easily understand that their oaths did not weigh much with me, and when they saw at last that I kept to my point, they gave way with the usual "Insh'-Allah." This circumstance meanwhile caused me to make a double march along the north side of the mountain, and I

became thus fully convinced that whatever there may be on the plain, ruins there are not. That M. de Saulcy should have found here not only the remains of buildings and cities, but positively those of Sodom, I declare I cannot attribute to any other source than the creation of his fancy.*

* The journey of M. de Saulcy has since been published in France, under the title of *Voyage autour de la Mer Morte.* Paris: 1853,—in Britain, under that of *Journey round the Dead Sea, and in the Lands of the Bible.* 2 Vols. London: 1853. The public seems to be charmed with his pseudo-discoveries. I have perused both the French and English editions with great care, hoping to find something to justify M. de Saulcy's conclusions. This is not the place to enter into a detailed critical review of his work. I must also say that contradictions, erroneous quotations, and false hypotheses are so numerous in it, that to refute them all would require a book as large as that of M. de Saulcy himself. So far as regards his quotations from Scripture and profane writers, I leave it to any one who feels anxious to know the truth to form an opinion for himself. From such an examination it will at once be evident, that though M. de Saulcy had really found ruins at the basis of the Salt Mountain, yet the sites of Zoar, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim can never have been where he imagines. Nevertheless, if a traveller accompanied by four or five others comes to tell us that in such and such a place he has found ruins, his testimony cannot at once be rejected by those who never have visited the spot; it is, therefore, of consequence that another traveller should bear witness whether his information is or is not worthy of confidence. Well, then, I have followed M. de Saulcy's track in this place with Bedouins of the same tribe, of the same shech—Bedouins accustomed to rove about in these localities. I had a copy of M. de Saulcy's manuscript map with me. It was, therefore, impossible for me to pass by unnoticed the ruins he mentions. With eagerness I *sought* for them. It was not possible to miss them; nevertheless I have not seen anything which confirms his assertions, and, notwithstanding all his assurances, I must set down his discoveries of Sodom as the mere work of the imagination. M. de Saulcy makes an appeal to his fellow-travellers, for the truth of his information. I hope I shall be allowed to appeal on the opposite side, to the testimony of Robinson and Smith, and their predecessors. Certainly what might have escaped the notice of the latter would not have eluded the careful research of the American travellers.

We found ourselves on the strand of the wonderfully formed lake, and rode for three hours and a half along the west side of the Salt Mountain, which is only a few hundred paces from the water's edge. In vain my eye sought for the terrific representations which

It will then be asked, what caused M. de Saulcy to run into such errors? I believe his misplaced generosity to Abû Dahûk. From what has been given above as a specimen of his rapacity, the character of this chieftain must be somewhat evident.

Abû Dahûk is of the same nature as his fellow-Bedouïns. Shew him that you are anxious to recognise in every stone squared off by the hand of nature a piece of antiquity; excite his covetousness by presenting him continually with piastres, whenever he shews you something that he calls a ruin; and you may be certain that he will shew you ruins (*khurbets*) every quarter of an hour, with names and surnames; if not near you, then, at all events, at a distance. This is the reason that, in those regions of the Bedouïns, one hears of so many names mentioned by some travellers, which other travellers are never able to re-find. I myself have repeatedly detected my Bedouïn guides in telling me stories. To lie is, as it were, daily bread among them; and nothing but a close cross-questioning is sufficient to bring out the truth. Nor must it be supposed that these Bedouïns have much knowledge of ancient history, or care at all about the correctness of tradition. Like all other travellers, save M. de Saulcy, I have found them most ignorant and indifferent about such things. *Piastres* and *ghazis* is all the Bedouïn cares for. Is it any wonder, then, that M. de Saulcy, after having spoiled Abû Dahûk by his continual presents, should be deceived by this fellow? Certainly the sharp eye of the robber-chief has well discerned the weak side of the traveller.

Under these circumstances, then, the caravan of M. de Saulcy proceeds along the Salt Mountain,—the Jebel Usdûm of the Arabs,—at the south-western side of the Dead Sea. A heap of stones, already seen and mentioned by Seetzen and Robinson (*Biblical Researches*, ii. 482), attracts the notice of the French traveller. He is deeply impressed with it. His imagination gets excited, and he forthwith recognises in these stones a part of the buildings of the burnt city. These are his words:—"By ten o'clock we pass close by a hillock, fifteen yards in diameter, covered with large rough stones, that look as if they had been burnt, and which constituted, at some remote and unascertainable period, a part of a round structure immediately commanding the shore. The sea is only thirty yards off to our left, and the moun-

some writers, and especially the American travellers of 1848, have given of the Dead Sea. I expected a scene of unequalled horror, instead of which I found a lake, calm and glassy, blue and transparent, with an unclouded heaven, with a smooth beach, and surrounded

tain side not more than twenty in the opposite direction. The sight of this building impresses me strongly; and my thoughts revert to Sodom. I question Abû Dahûk: 'What is that?' '*Quasr-Qadim*' ('an ancient castle,') is the answer. 'The name?' '*Redjom-el-Mezorrahl.*' ('The heap of fallen stones.')"

Now enthusiasm darkens M. de Saulcy's understanding. "For myself," he says, "I entertain no doubt that I see before me the ruins of a building, which was anciently a part of Sodom. The shech, Abû Dahûk, is very explicit on this point. When I ask him,—'Where is the town of Sodom?' he answers me, 'Here!' 'And did this ruin belong to the condemned city?'—'Assuredly.' 'Are there other vestiges of Sodom?'—Yes; there are a great many.' 'Where are they?'—'There, and there,' and he points to the extremity of the Salt Mountain, which we have just wound along, and the plain, planted with acacias extending to the foot of the mountain towards the Ouad-ez-Zouerah."

Upon this information of Abû Dahûk, M. de Saulcy builds a whole system of cities. Zoar—so he reasons—cannot be far off. Some days later he passes by the same road, and enters the Wadi es-Zuweirah. This name corresponds somewhat with Zoar. He knows that Irby and Mangles, Seetzen and Lynch, have found the ruins of Zoar at the entrance of the Wadi Kerak, at the northern bay of the south-eastern peninsula of the Dead Sea: but this contradicts his discovery. M. de Saulcy, therefore, sets to work to overthrow the accounts of these travellers, and also of Holy Writ, taking the precaution, however, to quote the Scriptures, along with such comments of his own, as to make them appear to plead in his favour.

Between Wadi-er-Rmaïl and Kureiteïn he sees a place which Abû Dahûk calls Souk-et-Thaemeh, and determines at once that it is Admah. Zeboim he finds in the heart of Moab; and, finally, Gomorrah, not far from the ruins of Jericho.

Feeling satisfied with having found out the error with regard to Sodom and Zoar, I have not given myself any further trouble in looking for the other three cities. And, indeed, one need not undertake the difficult and dangerous journey to the Dead Sea to perceive the absurdity upon which M. de Saulcy bases the discovery of the pentapolic cities.

by mountains whose blue tints were of rare beauty. To what shall I compare the appearance of the Dead Sea? I found that it bears a remarkable resemblance to Loch Awe, that picturesque lake on the west coast of Scotland. It is true, the Dead Sea has no villages nor fields around it, no woods nor castles on its banks; but as regards its general features, the blue sheet of water, the form and the colour of the mountains, I must indeed say that there was nothing in the impression which the salt lake made on me of the terrible nature which other writers represent it as having made upon them. On the contrary, the sight of such a broad expanse of water, after travelling through the fearful desert and the barren mountains, had something charming and refreshing about it, which made me think of the Bible description of the valley of Siddim, before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and her neighbouring cities.* What terrific scenes occur at times on this deep sunk lake, when storms and whirlwinds confound the elements, instances of which are given in the expedition of Lieutenant Lynch, one can easily conceive. I may thus count myself fortunate in having seen the lake, both from the rock of Masada and from the base of Jebel Usdûm, in such favourable circumstances. Especially yesterday, the atmosphere was particularly clear; to-day a mist hung over the water, in consequence of the evaporation, which yesterday was small, owing to the deficiency of warmth in the atmosphere. Probably also one sees less of the mist from the high ground than from the shore.

* Gen. xiii. 10.

The idea that birds which attempted to fly over the lake are killed by the noxious vapours arising from it has been long since exploded. I not only saw ducks fly over it, but also swim and dive in it, indulging in all the pleasures of their amphibious nature. It is, however, known with perfect certainty that no creatures, at any rate no fishes, can live in this water, so over-impregnated with salt. The few dead fishes and shells which have occasionally been found on the shores, were brought down by the waters of the Jordan. The only thing which the Dead Sea produces, besides bitumen and sulphur, is salt, which forms itself in crystalline deposits around everything with which its waters come in contact. So, for example, one finds on the beach pieces of driftwood covered more or less with a transparent coating of salt; even stones and pieces of clay I saw encased in such crusts of salt. The beach, too, which, in the rainy season, when the level of the lake rises higher, is partly inundated, is so entirely pervaded with salt, that it sparkles in the sun, whilst every hole in the sand, small or large, is filled up with this material. At the southern extremity of the lake is a marshy flat, called by the Arabs El-Ghor, probably the place where David defeated the Syrians (according to 1 Chron. xviii. 12, more accurately the Edomites), where Amaziah did the same,* and which in Scripture is called "the valley of salt." This plain in winter is often overflowed. Afterwards, when the rains cease, the waters recede, and a salt, bituminous, slimy morass remains behind, which, seen from afar, from the glittering of the particles of salt,

* 2 Sam. viii. 13; 2 Kings xiv. 7.

has the appearance of a sheet of water, but on a nearer approach reveals its true character. In the winter months, the crossing of this plain is very dangerous, owing to the loose marshy ground, the morass being besides intersected by a number of small temporary streams which run into the Dead Sea.

Much has been written on the formation of the Dead Sea, and the terrible catastrophe recorded in Gen. xix. Many theories have been proposed. The simple Bible narrative has been obscured by a great deal of so-called science. On these points I shall not now enter; but after having read with attention all that is said about it in books, and personally viewed it narrowly both from Masada and from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, I give you the following as my individual opinion. It appears, from soundings, that the Dead Sea, from the Jordan to the large peninsula on the south-eastern side (called by the Arabs, El-Lisan), is an immense bowl, rather more than fifty English miles long, and in the middle 1300 feet deep; that the remaining, or southern, part is an inundated plain, in extent about ten miles long, at the deepest only thirteen feet, while in some places it can even be forded. The peninsula just mentioned has, by its elevated position, been saved from the inundation. The geological formation of the mountains around the Dead Sea gives undoubted proof of a most overwhelming revolution, effected by subterraneous volcanic action; but this must have been in a very early period in the history of the now habitable globe. The overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah has nothing to do with this. The southern extremity of the Jordan plain, as described in Gen.

xiii. must, when Lot took up his abode in it, have had a lake, extending probably over the northern part, and comprising about three-fourths of the present Dead Sea. The Jordan watered and irrigated the plain of Siddim, lying to the south of the lake, which thus, from the tropical atmosphere of this sunken valley, shewed a vegetation rich and glorious "as the garden of the Lord." That this water was perfectly sweet is self-evident, for otherwise it would have spread, as it now does, death and desolation all around it. In the middle of the valley lay the four doomed cities—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim; within sight of Sodom, and, according to Gen. xix. 15–23, at the furthest an hour's distance, was Zoar. "Behold now," so Lot pleads with the messengers of the Lord, "Behold now, this city is near to flee unto," "but I cannot escape to the mountain." An hour's distance from the ruins of Zoar upon the peninsula, in a westerly direction, that is, in the middle of the valley of Siddim, the now inundated plain, the wicked city must have stood, and her sisters at no great distance from her. "And the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits" (bitumen wells), see Gen. xiv. 10. When Lot entered into Zoar, "then the Lord rained brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." Fire descended from heaven and kindled the combustible matter with which the earth was filled. The cities and all their inhabitants, the grass of the field,—the whole plain perished in the flames, so that when Abraham in the morning looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, "lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." The consumption of the layer of bitumen under the trodden

ground made its level sink several feet. The water of the lake thus obtained free access to the plain, and the site of the doomed cities was covered for ever. The tremendous shock given by this catastrophe to all surrounding nature probably stripped the Salt Mountain of the loose earth with which it must at that time have been covered: for the salt would otherwise have destroyed the whole of the vegetation of the vale of Siddim. The Salt Mountain, however, being once uncovered, every shower of rain must have washed down a considerable quantity of salt into the sweet water basin, which would always be increased as long as the Salt Mountain remained. What the other ingredients are of the bituminous channels which open into the lake, has been ascertained by the analysis of the American expedition and other learned men;* it is well known that lumps of bitumen are often found drifting upon the water. Is it possible that this lake, so over-impregnated with salt, should ever be restored to its sweetness? The Scripture seems to point to such an event, in Ezekiel xlvii. 8–10, even with the addition, in the eleventh verse, that "the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt." I dare not, however, express an opinion as to how the passage should be understood.

The levellings and barometrical measurements shew, that between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea, the land not only again reaches the level of the ocean, but rises above it as high as 800 feet. The supposition of

* See, among others, *On the Waters of the Dead Sea*, by Messrs Thornton and J. and W. Herapath.—*Edin. New Phil. Journal*, vol. xlviii. 1850.

Burckhardt, that the Jordan formerly found its way through the plain of Siddim and the Wadi-Arabah, is now overturned altogether by these measurements. The Jordan should have, in order to reach the Red Sea, to ascend 800 feet, besides the 1300 feet which the Dead Sea lies below the level of the ocean,—that is, in all, 2100 feet. That the river took this course thousands of years ago, before volcanic action had sunk its bed and the lake of Siddim to their present depth, is, however, possible.

One more remark—on the site of "the city of Salt" (Josh. xv. 62). From its name it is clear that it lay at no great distance from the Salt Mountain. M. de Saulcy gives a very attractive description of the fountains at the ruins of Embarrheg,* which he takes to be Thamara. On his grounds for this identification I do not place much value, but I attach importance to his discovery of this fountain, the only one I am acquainted with in the vicinity of the Salt Mountain capable of supplying a town with water. Thus, probably the city of Salt has stood there. The cairn at the foot of the Salt Mountain called Um-mzôghal, I do not think myself justified in taking to be ruins of a town or fortification, from the very fact of the absence of water. Robinson, too, seems not to consider Um-mzôghal as a ruin.

Again, what Josephus and other writers say of the still visible ruins of Sodom and her sister cities has no better foundation than hearsay.

Without seeing a human being, far or near, we rode along the base of the Salt Mountain, now alongside of

* *Journey round the Dead Sea*, vol. i. p. 258.

the masses of salt, washed by the rain into fantastic shapes, and again close to the shore of the lake, where I in vain attempted to pick up some curiosity. The isolated Salt Pillar of Lieutenant Lynch I did not see: at all events nothing corresponding to the plate inserted in his book; but, since the visit of the American travellers, it is quite possible that his whole pillar may have been dissolved and washed into the lake. Of isolated masses detached from the main rock, I saw, nevertheless, many. That such an isolated rock should be the pillar of Lot's wife, as the narrative of Mr Lynch leads one to suppose, is beyond criticism. One has only to consider the locality, and the manner in which these natural monuments are formed.

Fully half an hour before reaching the end of the Salt Mountain, on its precipitous brow, is the entrance of a dark cavern, which has a rill trickling along the bottom of it. This cavern, as far as I could see, did not take a downward course, but on the contrary, as the Bedouïns assured me, ascended for many miles under the hill, while the stream took its rise high in the mountains of the Wadi Jurrah. The water, from its contact with the salt mass, was not drinkable, quite as little as the Dead Sea into which it flows. All that the grotto afforded us was shade for half an hour, which was very welcome. I regretted that we could not, owing to the long journey which we had before us, spend more time there.

Solemn ride along this briny strand! Although external nature does not wear the sombre, hideous tints which their imagination has conjured up to some travellers, yet the appearance of the "cursed valley,"

and the sheet of water stretching away from Jebel Usdûm, are unusually impressive. The burning and vanishing ground, with its doomed cities, comes up vividly before the mind. What a tract of country! What a terrible witness to the righteous vengeance of God's justice! But what a solemn warning, on the other hand, to those who will not give heed to His commandments, nor receive His servants whom He sends to them: "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for" them.* And Capernaum, the privileged city, to whom this warning was emphatically addressed,† and all to whom the Lord, as to Capernaum, manifests his power, are called to the earnest consideration of *how* they have valued God's mercies. Isaiah therefore reminds Israel of her sins against light and privileges with these words: "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah."‡

And what we? . . . . What *we?* . . . . What WE?

An hour beyond the Salt Mountain, where the Ghor gradually begins to rise, we left the deep sunken valley, and wended our way to the right or west, between sharp-edged rocks of salt, lava, conglomerate, and sulphur, but chiefly of a white chalky nature. Whether these valleys have any particular name, I know not; our Bedouïns said they had not. We continually passed small brooks, clear as crystal, which, rising in the mountains, meandered among some tamarisk-like

* Matt. x. 15; Mark vi. 11; Luke x. 12.
† Matt. xi. 24. ‡ Isaiah i. 9.

shrubs. Our thirst became more and more intense as the heat increased. It was now two o'clock; the goat-skin which we had filled at Zuweirah was long since emptied, for our people were continually putting their lips to its mouth, expecting that we should soon get more water somewhere or other, though our Bedouïns assured us of the contrary. Imagine our disappointment: unsufferable heat and thirst; gurgling streams, but their water as salt as brine, quite impossible to be drunk. Our poor horses were with great difficulty restrained from it. The sight attracted them, and their distress was piercing: but the consequences would have been deadly.

A moderate ascent brought us soon to a plateau, at a height of about five hundred feet. It was nearly two miles broad from the edge, where it descended to the Dead Sea, to the foot of a high and narrow ridge, where our second climb began. If the descent at Zuweirah had been narrow and difficult, the ascent now was ten times worse. To me it seemed to border on the impracticable; and, indeed, how the loaded mules ascended on the narrow rocky path I cannot yet comprehend. Sometimes the path was scarcely so broad as to admit of a passage over it: my hair stood on end, not only at my own danger, but also at the sight of the poor beasts, which had to be forced along by all sorts of means, encouragement and blows, while every moment they were in danger of falling to the right or left of the giddy precipices. Besides, the soft chalk continually giving way made our footing very insecure, while its white colour, increased by the sun to a double degree of brightness, almost blinded our

eyes. The last crags were brown and gray, and consequently reflected more heat. We ascended two full hours before we reached the top. I imagine this point to be about two thousand five hundred feet above the level of the Dead Sea, and to lie directly west of the southern extremity of the Salt Mountain. The temperature of the atmosphere was here much less oppressive than below on the shores of the lake, and to our great joy we found in the dry bed of an intermittent stream, to the left of the road, a little water. One of our Bedouïns had promised us it while we were clambering up, to encourage us: indeed, he seemed to know every nook and corner in these mountains. Water there was; not, indeed, a great deal, but enough to refresh us a little, bowing down upon our knees, like Gideon's men.

It was not, however, long before the fatigues which we had undergone, as well on the day before as on this day, and that almost entirely without eating or drinking, began to be felt. The rocky plain over which we dragged our weary limbs was heated by the rays of the sun, which the whole day had been scorching it, and had made the atmosphere even more unbearable than it had been on the shores of the Dead Sea. The sun was going down; but the air did not become cool. Gradually darkness came on, and our place of destination, Kûrnûb, was still at a great distance. We could not, so our Bedouïns declared, reach that point before midnight, and except at Kûrnûb, there was not a drop of water in the whole desert. Still one never knows when Bedouïns speak the truth; the continual lying in which they are detected makes one put little con-

fidence in them. If Robinson's map were correct, then Kûrnûb could not lie so far to the west. I therefore held on as long as it was possible. The moon, meanwhile, rose, and it was a glorious evening. The plain, I remarked, began gradually to be intersected by strips of sand, and at last was entirely composed of sand, sprinkled here and there with shrubs, very much like the wide solitary plains of the Cape of Good Hope. I was sensible of a delicious perfume, and soon recognised the Retem, or juniper-tree, which I had met with between Hebron and Tell-'Arad. In what direction the mountains lay on the right and left I naturally could not in the darkness observe; but I perceived a moderately high range, about, I conjectured, half an hour to the right. How pleasant this evening ride should have been under more favourable circumstances; but, alas! our weariness was ever increasing, and made every step more and more difficult. On the one hand, thirst, and on the other, the utter exhaustion of our physical strength was overpowering. We had that day been more than fourteen hours in the saddle, and had ascended and descended many thousand feet, by extremely difficult mountain paths; a humble breakfast and a dry biscuit taken from the pocket, in the grotto of the Salt Mountain, was all we had tasted. No wonder that we were exhausted! Our horses and mules, too, had suffered greatly from hunger and thirst in this terrible expedition. What should we do? advance,—one, two, perhaps several hours before we reached the water of Kûrnûb? but in this there was a danger of our sinking under the fatigue;—or halt here in the middle of the desert, with-

out water, and also without the means of preparing an evening meal of rice or something of the kind? I tried to say something to encourage my people, although I myself was ready to fall from my horse with fatigue. But words were insufficient for what they had to endure. My mukhari in particular thought it inhuman cruelty on my part to oblige others to accompany me on such a mad expedition! At last I asked my people which they preferred, to go on until they came to the water, or to endure their thirst and encamp on the spot. They chose the latter alternative, and, half dead with fatigue, we laid ourselves down at half-past eight under the junipers. No tent was pitched, no field-bed was spread, so as to avoid all labour: the travelling blankets only were unrolled upon the still warm sand, and the canteen opened, in which there was still a bottle of Hebron wine, and a roast leg of goat from Wadi-er-Rmaïl. These I shared with all: there was also a piece of biscuit for each, and, thereafter, I commended our little company to the Shepherd of Israel, who "never slumbers nor sleeps."

It was long before I closed my eyes. Thirst and over-fatigue kept me awake. I thought of Elijah, when, desponding, he laid himself down to sleep under just such a juniper, and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough: now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." * It was not far from this place: for the Scripture says, "A day's journey from Beer-Sheba into the wilderness," which must have been on the way from that place to Horeb, a few hours distant from

* 1 Kings xix. 4.

hence. The Almighty's care which the prophet experienced in that moment of despair, and the twinkling stars above my head, which God once adduced as a witness to the truth of His promises,* all this encouraged me greatly in this vast parched desert. There is always something peculiarly solemnising, and at the same time encouraging, in being obliged, when destitute of all human aid, to lean solely on the saving and supporting arm of God!

Kept and protected from all evil, and somewhat, though not a great deal, refreshed by our rest, at break of day we made ready to resume our journey. The dawn shewed us that we had encamped in the dry bed of a shallow stream, full of flowers and shrubs. The Bedouïns pointed out the mountains on our right hand, and shewed me in the distance, on the top of a hill, a ruin called el-Mirkib,† in the vicinity of which water is found in the hollows of the rock; but it is so difficult to reach, that they had not wished us to direct our course thither instead of to Kûrnûb. In the darkness of the night the water at el-Mirkib would have been inaccessible. The spot where we slept was fully an hour and a half from the ruin.

In two hours and a half after we left the place where we had passed the night we reached the ruins of Kûrnûb. About an hour on this side I observed foundations of buildings close to the road; but according to the guides they had no particular name.

The ruins of Kûrnûb cover a large space of ground. The walls of a fortified tower are yet standing, as well as parts of private houses.

* Gen. xv. 5. † Probably Beth-marcaboth of Joshua xix. 5.

A mountain stream runs to the west of these ruins, and rolls along with tolerable precipitancy, for the ground, owing to several low hills, slopes rapidly down toward the south. Above this, about five hundred yards distant, is the course of a river dammed up by a wall, so that the bed above the wall forms a natural tank, from which the town appears to have been supplied with water. The tank, however, we found quite dry and filled up with sand. At some little distance was another clear, deep pool of water in a cavity among the rocks. How we enjoyed ourselves in it, I neither can describe, nor could you imagine. One must have suffered thirst to be able thoroughly to appreciate water. To drink, bathe, plash, and wash in it was a real enjoyment of which I could scarcely have enough.

Meanwhile, on account of the violent heat, I had got the upper part of my tent put up, as I intended to spend at least a couple of hours at Kûrnûb, when we were surprised by very unexpected company. Without knowing whence, I saw all at once six Bedouïns come running towards us, tolerably well-clad, and armed with gun and pistol. The surprise was by no means pleasant. Now the fun was going to begin, thought I,—and what was to be done? We had but one of our guides, old Saleh, with us, the other one having been unable to follow us further, being that morning too much knocked up by the fatigues of the preceding day. We left him behind, as he begged us to allow him to join a Bedouïn camp in the neighbourhood. Our anxiety was not, however, of long duration. Saleh recognised in the distance our

visitors as friends. They conducted themselves uncommonly well. They remained talking to us, until we again broke up our encampment, accompanied us half an hour on the road to 'Ar'ârah, and left with blessings innumerable.

So, you see, all Bedouïns are not, without exception, robbers. Had I had that arch-bandit Abû Dahûk with some armed men, I have no doubt that he would have made out these six new friends to be enemies, and have represented my situation as one in which my life was in danger. Probably also he would have discharged a pistol with loose powder at them, and have got up a sham fight to give himself importance in my eyes, and to give a colour to his rapacious demand for piastres.

What town, then, is Kûrnûb?

Dr Robinson takes it to be the Tamar of Ezekiel xlvii. 19; xlviii. 28,* but upon grounds which appear to me insufficient to justifiy his identification. He saw the ruins only from a distance, and did not know that they *were not ancient* remains. It is, nevertheless, possible, and even, looking to the comparatively copious supply of water, it is probable, that here in ancient times a city had stood. The ruins of Kûrnûb lie, moreover, on elevated ground, but not on a hill, as it appeared to the Professor when viewing them from a distance. I hope that Kûrnûb will yet be more narrowly examined by men versed in history and archæology. From Kûrnûb to 'Ar'ârah, my present camping ground, the distance is four hours. The latter lies much more to the north-west of the former

* *Bib. Res.* vol. ii. pp. 616, 622.

than we find it on the maps. The first two hours one goes along and through winding wadis, somewhat troublesome to horses owing to the sharpness of the rocks; the last two, along a sandy flat that slopes gradually down to the west, and has in this season of the year passed into a meadow beautified with herbage and flowers. I perceived nothing of the ruin marked on the map as Kubbet-el-Baul. A half-hour to the north-north-west of Kûrnûb, on the other hand, I saw a ruin surrounded with trees, among which some Bedouïn families were encamped with their tents. Here there was also water in the stony hollows. The Bedouïns called the ruin and also the shallow wadi which runs down from this to Kûrnûb, Abû-Taraîfeh.

We were among the wells of 'Ar'ârah before we were aware of it. No stone walls or other masonry surrounds them, and nobody is aware of them until they are seen close at hand. This convinces me anew of the difficulty of tracing out ancient localities in the wilderness. If the old water-springs are still there, if they give to this day a supply of drinkable water, then are such places well known to the Bedouïns; but if they are dried up and the building stones reduced to dust, then it becomes exceedingly difficult to discover any traces of their sites in a region so little inhabited as this wilderness, and that, too, only by the Bedouïns. It is not as in a cultivated and civilized country where assistance and information are everywhere to be met with, as well as the refreshment which the body requires. On the contrary, whoever travels in the wilderness, suffers so many privations, that he

must hasten with the utmost speed to get through; there is little chance of his being able to go back and forward, and to the right and left.

Nothing has so much surprised me as the lovely herbage with which this extensive undulating sandy plain is clothed. Sand is not now to be seen at all; all is grass and flowers. The wells around us, more than a dozen in number, have most of them an abundant supply of good water; the rest are filled with rubbish and sand. They are broad, and have a margin of old hewn stones, but without raised encircling walls. You may well believe that I have here a refreshing resting-place after the severe fatigues I have encountered. Add to this, that there is now blowing a pleasant cool wind from the sea; so that truly it will be with regret that I shall to-morrow morning leave a wilderness which has ceased to be a wilderness to me. Yet Saleh says that it must be done. He has heard from his friends this morning that the Taribîns, a tribe now at war with Abû Dahûk's, the Jehalîns, have encamped in the Wadi-Sherî'ah, lying not far from us to the north-west, and that their marauding parties are prowling in the neighbourhood. He is afraid that they may perceive our tent in the distance and fall upon us. Were this to take place, what would become of the protection for which Abû Dahûk is to pocket 400 piastres? Here we are, travelling without any protection that deserves the name. The good-natured and indefatigable Saleh is our guide; but God alone, not an arm of flesh, is our protection and our shield.

BEIT-JEBRÎN, *2d April.*

And the Lord has not put us to shame. We slept in all security until daybreak, then took a hasty cup of coffee, and were at half-past five ready to start. Old Saleh urged us to hasten. From 'Ar'ârah, the ancient Aroër of 1 Sam. xxx. 28, we advanced to Beer-Sheba, which lies three and a half hours to the north-west of 'Ar'ârah, being a good deal more to the north than the map shews. The dawn was most enjoyable. Fatigued with sitting on horseback, I followed Saleh, who went on before on foot. Would that you could have accompanied me on that morning walk! All my past fatigues seemed to have vanished; I felt myself quite revived. And how could it be otherwise? A delightful atmosphere on a table-land from 800 to 1000 feet above the level of the sea; the air perfumed with the odours of the flowers among the grass; larks clapping their wings joyously overhead; the stately storks collected in whole flocks in the camomile and mallow fields. . . .

All at once Saleh stood stock still.

"Do you see those two camels coming towards us from behind yonder hills in the south-west?" he said. "These belong to the Taribîn Bedouïns, who are in alliance with the Tiyâhahs against Abû Dahûk. They must be close beside us."

And Saleh was not mistaken. We came upon several of their goat-herds with their herds of goats. These, it is evident, could attempt nothing against us, as we had the advantage over them. But they could send word of our passing that way to their troop, which could not be far off. Saleh, however, desired to meet

them as friends, and gave them the thrice-repeated kiss of the Bedouïns, by which means he was cunning enough to get from them the needful intelligence respecting the camp of the Taribîns.

The tranquillity of the morning was, no doubt, so far clouded by this circumstance, and in the recollection of the hurry with which Saleh stepped on before, I even now run the risk of forgetting to acquaint you with two ruins which I saw, first when an hour to the north-west of 'Ar'ârah, and afterwards again when at Beer-Sheba; they are called, the one Jerrah, and the other Sâáwe,* and lie about the southern entrance of the Wadi-Chulîl, the valley that runs up to Hebron, and situated on high hills.

How much I lament not having had more time and opportunity for examining those hills! It is on these last heights of the Judea mountain range, and on their southern face, that many of the cities of Judah and Simeon, still unknown, must have stood.

At 9 A.M. we reached the wells of Beer-Sheba, now, too, called by the Arabs Bir-es-Seba. They are five in number, narrow at the opening, and deep. Dr Robinson states his having seen only two wells, and those of a much larger diameter than what I saw. It seems clear to me that here there must be a mistake; for the wells lie so close to each other, that any one who observes one of them can hardly miss seeing the rest. They form, as it were, a group of wells in the shallow dry bed of a stream called Wadi-es-Seba. The ruins of the town lie about ten minutes' distance to the north-east of the wells on an elevation; but they ex-

* Perhaps the Hazar-Shual of Josh. xv. 28, and xix. 3.

tend also to the north-north-east and north of the wells. I saw the ruins; but I should express myself more correctly were I to say the foundations of ruins, for the houses here were probably built of a mixture of naturally round stones and clay, which in the lapse of centuries have returned to their original condition, so that it is vain to look now for the fallen walls of the ancient frontier city.

The wells of Beer-Sheba, too, are just as little visible from a distance as those of 'Ar'ârah. I can now fully understand how Hagar, when her child seemed likely to die of thirst, as she wandered in this wilderness, found herself near such a well without being aware of it,* until the Lord opened her eyes, and enabled her to find water at but a short distance. Whether this was one of the five wells of Beer-Sheba we are not informed; we know, however, that Abraham at this place made a covenant with Abimelech, the king of Gerar. "Wherefore he called that place Beer-Sheba; because there they sware both of them." †

I had purposed spending the day at Beer-Sheba, and in its neighbourhood. As the residence of the patriarchs,‡ as the city in which the sons of Samuel, Joel and Abiah, administered justice,§ and as Israel's frontier city, so well known from the oft-occurring expression "from Dan to Beer-Sheba," ‖ Beer-Sheba had too much Biblical attractiveness for me to be willing to make a speedy departure from it. Over and above this, the luxuriant herbage and excellent water gave a special charm to the place, although the wood that

* Gen. xxi. 14–19. † v. 31. ‡ Gen. xxii. 19; xxvi. 23; xlvi. 1.
§ 1 Sam. viii. 2. ‖ Judges xx. 1, &c.

Abraham planted there has long ere now disappeared. But Saleh entreated me not to remain here. We saw Bedouïns approaching us from different sides, and these would have caused us much annoyance had we pitched the tent; for although they were not direct enemies of Abû Dahûk, still they did not belong to his friends, and it would have been unsafe, by setting up our tent, to tempt such a thievish rabble to plunder us. I contented myself, accordingly, with an hour's repose, during which we watered our horses and mules at the stone troughs at the side of the wells. One more disappointment I had to suffer in consequence of the war among the Bedouïns in Wadi-Sherî'ah. According to the contract with Abû Dahûk, I was to travel from Beer-Sheba to Gerar. It is true the shech told me that Gerar was unknown to him; but, nevertheless, I had put Gerar in the list of places which it was stipulated that I should visit, for I did not believe him, and thought that he represented himself as knowing nothing of Gerar to prevent my travelling in those districts. Gerar has ceased to exist for many long years, and its site has been forgotten. Scripture, however, gives sufficient indications to look for the site of the ancient Philistian capital betwixt Beer-Sheba and Gaza. Yet, whichever method I tried, whether promises or threats, Saleh was immoveable. Nothing could induce him to take me along the road to Gaza, so firmly was he of opinion that our meeting with the belligerent parties of the Wadi-Sherî'ah, whom we must have necessarily passed, would prove fatal to us. "If you would have me to take you to antiquities," said he, "we shall make a circuit from this to Bir-Isek, and from that to

Beit-Jebrîn; but don't press me recklessly to imperil your own life and the lives of your conductors."

Thus far I had found the old Saleh so discreet and accommodating, that I did not think it advisable to insist on the journey from Beer-Sheba to Gaza. The way, too, which he proposed, to Beit-Jebrîn, was new; no traveller had as yet taken it, and I should thus, while relinquishing Gerar, be compensated by other discoveries. Forward we advanced, accordingly, in all haste, in order, besides, to get rid of half-a-dozen mendicant Arabs, who had long followed us in the hope of possessing themselves of something or other, at least of a baksheesh. Our course now lay north-north-east by the still remanent foundations of the city of Beer-Sheba, which had last year been used as threshing-floors, in consequence of which some part of the grains of corn that had been left had sprung up of themselves, and were already come into ear. The fields where this corn had previously been grown lay along our line of road.

For another hour and a half nothing new presented itself. The common caravan road from Egypt to Hebron lay more and more to our right, or east side, the further we travelled. Ere long we came to the entrance into the hill country of Judea. It forms a gradual ascent, with broad valleys, which here seem surrounded rather by hills than by mountains. The grassy covering of the wilderness still uniformly prevails, and some remains of ancient buildings lying on the north side of a wadi were not known to Saleh. I have once and again remarked that he never puts me off with false names when he does not know the right ones.

About ten minutes further on we passed along a flattened rocky hill, where one recognises at once the site of an old fortress, called el-Lechiëh, or Lekiëh. To quiet Saleh I refrained from climbing to the top of it; but contented myself with his assuring me that there were to be found there a number of ancient, but now dried-up wells. The sides of the hill are full of holes and caves. The peculiar form of this high, strong eminence at the entrance of the hill-country of Judea, and its position as the outermost frontier stronghold towards the south, arrested my attention; and a sober examination of Scripture has since led me to the gratifying conviction that el-Lechiëh can be no other than the Bealoth of Joshua xv. 24, and of the list of cities "against the south," of Judah's tribe, yet afterwards assigned to Simeon, in whose register of cities (Josh. xix. 8) it is called "Baalath-beer, Ramath of the south," * a name that quite agrees with the position of this stronghold. See also 1 Sam. xxx. 27.

This city again occurs in Scripture, at 1 Kings ix. 18, and 2 Chron. viii. 6, as one of Solomon's store-cities, which, on account of the importance of their position, he strongly fortified. The expression, "And all their villages that were round about the same cities unto Baal" (on the margin, Baalath-beer)—1 Chron. iv. 33—shews withal the position of the place on the frontier, and also the different ways in which this name appears in Scripture. The most important circumstance, however, in connexion with this Ramath of the south, is that mentioned in Judges xv. The Philis-

* The Dutch version has Báalath-Beër, *which is* Ramath against the south.

tines, enraged at Samson, on account of the "great slaughter" wherewith he had revenged himself on them, "pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi." Samson, that he might not expose his own people to the revenge of the Philistines, submitted to be bound by his fellow-countrymen. He was taken from the rock Etam to Lehi. The Philistines now concluded they were sure of having their great enemy in their power. They shouted with joy as they went to meet him. But the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson. He found a moist (or new) jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith, and "he called that place, Ramath-lehi," that is *Ramath of the jaw-bone.* In the el-Lechiëh of the Arabs it is not difficult to find the Lehi of Scripture. I much regretted afterwards that the identification had not struck me as I rode along the hill, so that I might have looked about for the spring that God clave in the rock to revive Samson, when, after the slaughter of the Philistines, he was ready to die with thirst, and called upon God in his distress. Noble passage in Samson's history! How delighted should I be to exchange thoughts with you on the subject, were I not so pressed for time, that I must leave it to yourself to dig the gold out of this mine.

Fully an hour and a quarter beyond the tell of el-Lechiëh we passed another not less considerable ancient stronghold on a hill, standing like Lechiëh on the west side of the way, and called Hhora, while, hardly twenty minutes further, two more such tells stood close to each other, a valley running between them towards the west.

The two last tells seem to have but one name, that of Chewèlfeh, in which I recognised the Kuweilifeh of Robinson (*Bib. Res.* vol. i. p. 306, and vol. iii. p. 8). Between Hhora and Chewèlfeh there is to be seen a large ancient well, half fallen in, but the huge building stones of which appeared to belong to a very early period of Israelitish history. I am still in the dark as to the places represented by Hhora and Chewèlfeh. In the former I should be inclined to look for the Horma of Joshua xv. 30 and xix. 4; but then that must have been a different Horma from that on the hill Seir, spoken of in Numbers xiv. 45; xxi. 3; and also in Deut. i. 44, and Judges i. 17. If this conjecture be right, then I believe Hhora to be the same Horma, one of the thirty-one royal cities which Joshua smote, as that mentioned in Joshua xii. 14. The Hebrew M, as is sometimes the case, may be left out in the Arabic form of Horma.*

But what double stronghold was it, whose ruin-covered knolls are now called Chewèlfeh?

Had we followed the way through the broad grassy valley which we had entered on leaving el-Lechiëh, we should have reached el-Burj some hours afterwards, and could then have proceeded due northwards to Beit-Jebrîn. I perceived, from the many traces of camels and horses on the road, that this is the principal road from Beit-Jebrîn to the places in the south. But Saleh was not conscious of there being any other ruins on this road than those of es-Zàâk, lying, as he indicated to me, a quarter of an hour to the south of

* Were Hhora not at so great a distance from el-Lechiëh, I should feel tempted to think it identical with En-Hakkore of Judges xv. 19.

el-Burj. We struck, accordingly, into the valley of Chewèlfeh, and found there, a few hundred yards from the entrance, a water-tank, quadrangular in form, and of an ancient style of construction, surrounded by a multitude of Bedouïns, both men and women, and some with their herds. It was now one o'clock. With the exception of our halt at Beer-Sheba, we had been in the saddle without intermission since day-break. I could sit no longer on horseback from sheer fatigue; and so it was also with the other members of my small caravan. I wished, therefore, to pitch the tent at this pond, all the more as the glen seemed to shelter us from the mass of the Bedouïns, who were prevented from seeing us by a rising ground quite close to us on the west side. But I was hunted on from place to place. Even here we found we could not pitch the tent, for we were surrounded by a crowd of Bedouïns, who, although of a neutral tribe, still would not have respected Abû Dahûk's guide. Their camp lay half an hour to the west of the pond, behind yonder hill, and to tarry at such a spot was sure to bring upon us the whole hive. Exhaustion and hunger compelled me, however, to rest here for two hours; the mules were unladen, to be sure, but all remained as it had been packed up, with the exception of the canteen, for I had the last partridge, which Peter had shot yesterday, cooked on the open ground with the utmost despatch, and with it the last of the macaroni that remained, and which to-day was substituted for rice, our usual every-day food. While this was going on I had a crowd of the curious about me, who could with difficulty keep their fingers off the cooking and eating

utensils. In particular, some swaggering young Bedouïns, who came up prancing on beautiful mares, and entertained me with a mock fight round Ferez and his macaroni stew, perhaps to give me a sample of their skill in fighting on horseback, seemed little inclined to allow the traveller who had thus ventured among them to depart unmolested. My fatigue was such as to deprive me of any desire to have intercourse with them; yet I could not but think that were I master of the Arabic tongue, a fortnight's excursion in these tracts, with the advantage of being on friendly terms with the Bedouïns, and aided by the practice of medicine and surgery, would enable me to find out all the localities of Judah and Simeon.

Old Saleh had the wisdom to treat these stranger Bedouïns as friends, and at the same time to shew an increased measure of respect for the traveller to whom he was acting as guide. Thus we got away without difficulty, and had now, by Saleh's advice, to travel on till dark, in order that the Bedouïns might not know where our quarters for the night were to be. There was very little risk of our being attacked while actually travelling, but much risk of our being surprised as we lay asleep and with all our goods unpacked. The course we now followed was alternately west-north-west and north-north-west. We had necessarily to pass over the heights to the west of Chewèlfeh, and saw from them the Bedouïn camps at not half an hour's distance from us, on the north side of the Wadi-Sherî'ah, in which, beyond the camp, Tell-Sherî'ah rose very conspicuously, as near as I could guess at from two and a half to three hours' distance from us. Yet another knoll, Tell-Mellâhah, at-

tracted my attention. That, however, I first saw later in the day. I have put it down in my map as accurately as I could, but much regret having been unable to visit it. One or other of these two tells may have been the ancient Ziklag.

I was delighted at last to see the sun sink and set; twilight came on fast; for the last hour we had not perceived any Bedouïns; we were passing through uniformly low, grassy hills, and here and there along cultivated land; we seemed separated from the whole world, and now, by Saleh's advice, the tent was pitched. Once more, however, it was where there was no water, and consequently without any refreshment after the fatigue of such a day. My people in some measure made up for this by chewing and sucking the watery stems of a thistle plant much resembling a young artichoke, and which grows abundantly in the grassy places. I tried this delicacy, but found its insipid, sweetish-bitter taste far from being so seductive to my palate as old Saleh and my other fellow-travellers esteemed it.

Once more did the Lord's faithfulness and loving-kindness keep watch over us through the night. Sleep had refreshed all of us. As soon as the sun arose we were on the way. Then we came, after half an hour's riding, unexpectedly on the fountain Kesâba, a natural spring, which runs on with a tiny rill for some hundred yards, and is then lost in the sand. Had we but known yesterday evening that it was so near at hand! Saleh himself seemed much surprised. That we halted, had a good cup of coffee prepared, and converted into a breakfast the last eatable articles remaining in our provision chest, you may well suppose; and also

that our hearts, thankful for the preservation we had experienced, joined with the soaring lark in its song of praise. As we sat resting here, there came past us a band of ladies, some on foot, others on asses, perhaps from twenty-five to thirty in number. They were not at all timorous, though unaccompanied by cavaliers. On the contrary, they seemed to think their meeting with us quite a treat, and remained for some time beside us, prattling and conversing quite gaily. Ladies? I hear you ask. Yes, ladies; be it understood, however, Bedouïn ladies, on their way with provisions to their husbands, who had decamped an hour before for the Wadi-Sherî'ah on a fighting expedition. Their loud talking seemed to find echoes in the hills around us; at least from various points we saw Bedouïns approaching us. But our breakfast was over; the baggage was soon put up again; and the Bedouïns seeing us move off, followed our example, and each took his own way.

An hour and a half's ride through many undulating and winding valleys, and uniformly among low grassy hills, brought us to the well Bir-Isek (Isaac's well). What well can this be? A well with which tradition, without any good reason, has associated the name of Isaac? One of the wells mentioned in Genesis xxvi.? Perhaps the well Rehoboth (ver. 22); for Isaac's herdsmen seem to have abandoned the run of the valley of Gerar, in order to live without molestation elsewhere, until he went up to Beer-Sheba. Bir-Izek is undoubtedly a well of high antiquity and great notoriety among the inhabitants of the land. It has a wide diameter, and is eighty feet deep; the ancient quadrangular stones of the raised margin are quite sawn through by the ropes that have thousands of times

drawn up the vessels let down for water. The water, however, had an insipid and unpleasant taste. From the small amphitheatre of low hills in which Isaac's well is situated, to Beit-Jebrîn, we had still a ride of two and a half hours, with a north-east course. At about an hour's distance from the well stands a ruin-covered hill called Tell-el-Kebaibeh, which must once have formed a strong key-fortress at the base of the mid-Judea-mountains. From this point to Beit-Jebrîn we rode through an uninterrupted series of ancient remains, bits of wall, or large hewn stones lying scattered about; sometimes, also, over pieces of an ancient causeway, while the hill-sides likewise, to the right and to the left of our path, were often covered with ruins.

Undoubtedly we were here traversing a district of country which in former times must have been quite studded over with towns and villages. The wilderness and the grassy hills had now come to an end. They were succeeded by the gray rock, here and there studded with oak thickets; and the olive-tree, which we had not seen for some days, again delighted our hearts. A full half-hour on this side of Beit-Jebrîn, Saleh pointed out to me a high tell in the south-south-east. "That is Tell-Chilchis," said he, "the most remarkable among the tells of this neighbourhood." The names of the ruins along the road he did not know.

Beit-Jebrîn is encircled by rocky hills. We were close upon it when I first saw it. The village in itself is inconsiderable, but the contrast between the dark shade of the olives and the light green corn-fields along the hill-sides, with the blue lofty mountain range of Judea on the background, and some Roman ruins on

the foreground, make it well worthy of the pencil of an artist. Mosleh-el-Hasy, the Metzellim of Beit-Jebrîn, immediately on my sending him the letter of the Pasha of Jerusalem, had a suitable spot pointed out to me, on a grass field at the foot of what is properly the village, for the pitching of the tent, while his servants brought us milk, butter, eggs, honey, and rice, on which we hope forthwith to regale ourselves. As the Metzellim will probably lose no time in coming to wait upon us, I must hasten to close this letter. Saleh is not the least happy of the whole party, on account of the journey having been so successfully prosecuted. Should you ever happen to travel in this country and Saleh be still alive, take him as your guide in the southern districts of Palestine. You could not desire a more faithful or more serviceable conductor. Poor Saleh! What a severe and long excursion have you had with me! When I gave him the promised baksheesh (twenty piastres and a few old pieces of clothing) the tears started into his eyes with delight. From Abû Dahûk, he assured me, he would not receive so much as his share of the 400 piastres paid by me. Saleh, immediately after eating, wanted to proceed forthwith to Hebron, in order to receive the 200 piastres deposited with Besharah. I give him this letter to be forwarded from Hebron to Jerusalem, and so from that by post. You will, no doubt, join me in thanks and praise for the preservation and protection I have experienced on this journey. About the end of next week I hope to return to Jerusalem, after having first made a tour through the land of the Philistines.—Farewell! Ever yours! . . . . .

'Akir (Ekron), *4th April.*

My dearest Friend,—It begins to be more and more my Sunday's work to tell you my adventures—not by choice, but of necessity—for my daily travelling becomes, from its long endurance, so fatiguing that I heartily rejoice if I can but each evening, while seated on my travelling rug in the tent, write out my journal from the memoranda noted down in my pocket-book while on horseback during the course of the day. It is usually late before I can begin to do so. Visitors always take up my time, and to drive them off is out of the question. Their talk, too, is always important to me, if not for the pieces of geographical information it furnishes, at least in order to my making myself acquainted with the character of this people. At Beit-Jebrîn, however, with all their courtesies, they made their visits excessively troublesome. I was hardly allowed to eat in peace; and here, had I not taken the liberty to beg of Yousif, the Shech of 'Akir, to leave me for a time to myself, I should not have had a single moment the whole day to call my own. Although the tent remained pitched, and although we remained at rest, still the Lord's-day was disturbed by much that I could well have wished to be otherwise. But we have at all times, and in all circumstances, many wishes that must remain unfulfilled. Hence also I must keep

the Lord's-day unto the Lord as I can, and not as I would.

I am now in quite another district. The wild naked mountains of the Dead Sea and the desert solitudes of Beer-Sheba are succeeded by a gently undulating tract, —a meadow stretching as far as the eye can reach, and clothed in the loveliest garniture of grass and flowers that the eye can behold.

But I must not make so sudden a leap over the twenty-four hours spent at Beit-Jebrîn, and bring you at once to Ekron, without saying something of what I saw between the two places.

Well, then, you will remember that my tent last stood pitched on the grass field at Beit-Jebrîn. Saleh had gone off to Hebron, and I found myself again in a more civilised world than that in which I had been wandering during the last week. The kindness of Shech Mosleh had provided us, too, with the needful refreshment of good food, and after I had for some hours, while enjoying pipes and coffee, had my tent full of visitors, there remained a pleasant afternoon for walking round the place and examining the important antiquities which Robinson has so copiously described.* With his book of travels in my hand, I walked along the wall, 600 feet in length,—a wall built of heavy hewn stones, and forming the north side of the ancient and renowned Roman fortress, Eleutheropolis. I stood long at the beautiful large gate, gazing in silent admiration at the architect's work. After that, I visited the castle, now presenting truly no more than a heap of rubbish, a medley of dilapidated walls, arched

* *Bib. Res.* vol. ii. p. 355, &c.

vaults still standing, and among them the huts of some poor villagers. The American travellers heard something said here of a church with paintings in the southern wing of the castle, but which was enclosed and buried among the ruins. With the help of some of the villagers, I succeeded in creeping in by a hole in the wall, and getting a sight of the so-called church. It is a small passage extending the full length of the south wall of the castle, with six pillars adorned with beautifully carved marble capitals. I saw no paintings, or even hewn ornamented work. That this gallery ever served for a Christian church I doubt, on account of its form; but that the Mohammedans have used it as an oratory is very likely, and agrees with the testimony of the inhabitants. Hence what was originally probably a hall of state, or a gallery of the Roman general who commanded the castle, now passes among the villagers as the church (el-keneiseh).

I examined, also, the subterranean chambers and caves in the hills to the west of the village, but not the much larger caves, ornamented with sculpture, in the rocks close to the ruin of the church Mar-Hannah, and situated half an hour to the south-east of Beit-Jebrîn. The sun began to decline, and I had to choose between the two,—to visit Mar-Hannah, of which the villagers told me great things, or to take a sketch of the ruins of the ancient Eleutheropolis, which was just then in the best light it had been in for the whole day. I gave my preference to the latter, that I might preserve both for you and myself a lively memorial of Beit-Jebrîn. While busy with my sketch,

the herdsmen came down the hill-slopes with their herds to drink at the pond on the foreground close beside me. Objects of a better effect for my sketch I could not desire.

The author of the *Biblical Researches* has devoted a great many pages of his three octavo volumes to the identification of Beit-Jebrîn with the Beto-Gabra of Ptolemy, the Eleutheropolis of the Romans, the episcopal city Beit-Geberin, or Gibelin, of the Crusaders —the fort that, after being destroyed by the Saracens, was, in 1134, rebuilt under King Fulco of Jerusalem, yet, in 1244, was lost for ever when taken by the Sultan Bibars. This discovery has been of the highest importance for Bible geography, as Eusebius and Jerome have assumed Eleutheropolis as the chief station from which the distances of a number of other large and small towns are reckoned. Eleutheropolis had become altogether unknown. To this the change of name had not a little contributed, and so strange was even the Roman fortress to the Crusaders, that they confounded Gibelin with Beer-Sheba, which lies a degree further to the south. A discovery of such importance I may well recommend you to study in Robinson's own words. I shall merely add, that while we do all homage to the acute and learned American traveller, we must not forget that a moiety of the honour belongs to his countryman, the Rev. Dr Eli Smith, whose knowledge of the Arabic was a beacon to Robinson, without which he would have groped about in much darkness. The difficulty that I myself have experienced from ignorance of the language, leads me

to consider the combination of two such men as Eli Smith and Robinson as the most auspicious circumstance that could have happened for Biblical geography. We may well thank God for its occurrence.

Want of great power teaches a man to make the best use of the little he has. This is my daily experience with respect to those pieces of information which I obtain from the natives. For although both the above-named travellers have discovered much, especially in these districts, there yet remains a wide field for investigation. In the short space of time available to me, I can but half satisfy myself in many places, and had to leave Beit-Jebrîn, too, with the wish that I might once more have an opportunity of visiting it, or that others would ere long come thither to trace out in these regions the cities inhabited by Israel in the days of old. It is true I obtained, by means of questioning and cross-questioning, during the evening in the tent, a list of ancient places in which at first sight I recognised some of the hitherto unknown names of Joshua's register of cities, and which I hope hereafter to communicate to you on my map; but such places as Gath, Makeddah, Adullam, Libnah, and others, still remain quite unknown.

Meanwhile I found it necessary to obtain a new guide. Shech Mosleh undertook to find me one. "The man who is best acquainted with the whole country," said he, "is old Tahir, on account of his repeated pilgrimages to Mecca called Hadj Tahir, a good-humoured corpulent Arab, with a handsome gray beard, stately appearance, and of great repute on account of his sanctity." Hadj Tahir, however, with all

the severity of his manner of life, had not laid aside his love for piastres. When we were all ready for starting, that is to say, when the mules were laden and I myself on the saddle, he came to represent some difficulties, alleging that his remuneration as guide was not secure. I had to assure him in the presence of the shech of the payment of ten piastres per day, without which he declined going with me. This demand was certainly fair enough.

The way now led first a distance of thirty-five minutes north-west, after that north-north-east, to the village of Kudna, through a broad valley, along whose west side, at forty minutes' distance from Beit-Jebrîn, the rubbish heaps of Arak-hala lie, the site, undoubtedly, of an ancient city, as numerous wells seem to indicate. Here the road makes a bend round towards the west, while to the west-north-west and east-north-east two high ruin-covered hills are visible, Tell-Bûlnâb, or Bûrnâb, and Jedeidah, the most elevated hills in the whole neighbourhood. We now passed along an uninterrupted succession of cultivated fields. Here stood the corn, with the promise of an abundant harvest; there lay the land ploughed for receiving sesame and pulse, which can do without the winter rains; and, elsewhere, people were busily occupied in planting tobacco, which is done by preference among old ruins and stones.

Kudna lies at an hour and ten minutes' distance from Beit-Jebrîn. It is an inconsiderable village, yet has the ruins of a quadrangular castle, apparently of Saracenic construction. The village shech appeared while I halted for a moment to take a glance of the

ruins, and coming up to us, begged we would alight, in order that he might get us some coffee, by way of refreshment. Want of time, however, prevented my accepting this proffered courtesy. We rode on, and came three quarters of an hour afterwards to Deir-Dubbâ'n, a little to the north-west of which are found those huge vaulted grottoes which Robinson (*Bib. Res.* vol. ii. pp. 352 and 425) has described. I saw first the four-sided, hewn, deep pits, corresponding with one another like a series of chambers; after that, I saw the huge caves, originally formed by nature in the white calcareous rock, and finished off by the hand of man with concave domes, most of which have an opening a-top for the admission of light. My eye differed, however, so far from that of the American travellers, which guessed those dome-shaped caves to be only from 20 to 30 feet high, and from 12 to 20 feet in diameter, that some of them appeared to me to be at least 60 feet high, and more than twice as wide. The ancient inscriptions on the walls, which Robinson neglected to take down, I have copied as accurately as I could, and now send you the result, hoping that you may meet with some one to decipher them for you.* You will see that the rock in some places has been broken off, and that, as a whole, the inscriptions have greatly suffered in the course of ages. From some of the crosses sculptured on the wall,—crosses, the ends of which have been deformed with crescents,—I saw that these caves must have served as dwellings for Christians, before their blood-thirsty conquerors, the Saracens, had made a conquest of the country. At present the under-

* See the plate.

ground vaults of Deir-Dubbâ'n serve as stables for the cattle of the villagers. I was surrounded with camels, goats, and cows, while in the midst of a circle of curious Moslems I copied the inscriptions.

Robinson's first conjecture with regard to these caves was, that they possibly might indicate the site of the ancient Makkedah or Adullam. Afterwards he seems to have abandoned this idea; and, being assured that they were neither cisterns, nor stone-quarries, nor under-ground magazines for storing grain, he inclines at last to the opinion, that the Idumeans, who for a long period occupied these regions, as Josephus and Jerome relate, must have inhabited those subterranean dwellings. No doubt this is every way possible; but it is not thereby proved that the caves were used by the Idumeans *first* as dwellings, or furnished by them with domes, and openings for the admission of light, unless similar grotto residences could be found in Idumea, —a fact which future travellers in that country will perhaps ascertain. For my part, as long as no other locality is known to answer better to the statements of Scripture than this, I hold Deir-Dubbâ'n to be Adullam, the royal Canaanitish city of Josh. xii. 15, which appears in the list of the cities of Judah as situated "in the valley" near Jarmuth and Socoh (Josh. xv. 35). "The valley" is an expression that must be understood relatively. Deir-Dubbâ'n, as well as Socoh and Jarmuth, does not lie exactly in what is properly the plain, but at the foot of the Judea mountain range, and thus literally in "the valley," when viewed in relation to the cities in the mountains, although standing higher than the plain itself. The cave of Adullam, to

which David escaped when he fled from the sight of Achish out of Gath,* not only agrees well with the cave of Deir-Dubbâ'n, but there is no other known cave at the base of the Judea mountains so well adapted for the concealment of a number of refugees. Let not this cave be confounded, however, with that to which Saul repaired, and which we some days ago visited near Tekoah (1 Sam. xxiv.) How well, then, do these words explain themselves!—"His brethren, and all his father's house," *went down* to the cave of Adullam. From Bethlehem to Deir-Dubbâ'n, it is indeed a *coming down*. And here, then, it was "that every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them." Striking type of Jesus, the Son of David!—

To poor ones, in their helplessness,
Their pain and misery,
Fleeing to Him in their distress,
He will a Saviour be.†

Eusebius and Jerome place Adullam ten Roman miles, or three hours and a half to the east of Beit-Jebrîn; but that there is a mistake here is plain, for any one going from Beit-Jebrîn eastwards, at least for three hours and a half, would find himself high among the hills, which at once disagrees with what the Scriptures say of Adullam.

Robinson seems to take Deir-Dubbâ'n for Gath, and Ritter, too,‡ who adduces various reasons in support of this opinion. Those Scripture passages that speak

* 1 Sam. xxii. † Ps. lxxii. 12. ‡ *Erdkunde* 16*ter Theil*, 136–139.

of Gath, cannot to my conviction be brought to agree with the position of Deir-Dubbâ'n.

Full three quarters of an hour's riding over and along low rocky hills, overgrown with low brushwood, and alternating with cultivated fields, brought me to the village of es-Safiëh, which lies at the foot of an isolated conical hill called Tell-es-Safiëh, the pointed summit of which commands a view of the whole surrounding country. Whether there ever stood a town here, mentioned in Scripture, we know not, though it is possible.* This only we know from Robinson and other travellers, that Tell-es-Safiëh in the time of the Crusaders had a watch-tower, or castle with four towers at the angles, called Blanche-garde, and also Clermont (Speculum Album), the remains of which are still extant.† Robinson reminds his readers of some heroic achievements of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, which must have occurred in this neighbourhood. He also suggests the idea that Safiëh may possibly be derived from the Hebrew Zephathah,‡ the vale in which Asa smote the mighty host of Zerah the Ethiopian, in answer to that remarkable prayer: "Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee." The Scottish missionaries who, in 1839, passed at fully two hours' distance to the west of Tell-es-Safiëh, made the same suggestion when they came upon the three villages called es-Sawafîr (not Safeen).

* Tell-es-Safiëh answers well to the Mizpah (watch-tower) of Josh. xv. 38.

† *Bible Researches*, vol. ii. p. 336. ‡ 2 Chron. xiv. 10.

Sawafîr and Safiëh, although distinct words, seem, however, to have the same root. The wide plain to the west of Tell-es-Safiëh presents ample space for the drawing up of an army, as must have been required by so mighty a host as that in question.

No better point could be imagined than Tell-es-Safiëh for the measurement of angles, and here, at the same time, Tahir gave a proof of his acquaintance with the villages and the ruins in the country. There were some, it is true, that he did not know the names of; yet one or two villagers, who looked at my operations with no small surprise, helped him out when necessary. They told me also that the castle on the hill-top goes under the name of el-Kûdr (that is, St George). Thus I made considerable progress here towards the completion of my map, yet, notwithstanding all the aid I had, not without much difficulty; for the atmosphere to-day was so uncommonly clear, and the light consequently so overpowering, that it was almost impossible to keep the eye long directed to a distant object. Gazing at objects intently through the telescope made me almost blind. Under how many difficulties must the surveying of this country necessarily be carried on!

From Tell-es-Safiëh one proceeds in an almost due northerly course to 'Akir. And it is now that one comes fairly into the Sephala, the great plain of the Philistines.* Its luxuriant green carpeting was quite unbroken; its distant parts, by their delicate blue colour, seemed to merge into the sea; nothing but a low range of hills, running parallel with the coast, and

* Obad. 19.

passing just behind 'Akir, broke the uniformity of this extensive prospect. The weather was as pleasant as possible; a clear blue sky, indeed, but at the same time a cool wind from the sea. I was, moreover, encompassed with cultivated fields, exhibiting so splendid a luxuriance that it was truly delightful for the eyes to see the heavy ears of corn bending before the wind.

The distance from Tell-es-Safiëh to 'Akir is little less than four hours. By this way one passes on the road the villages of Tina and Shahhmeh, while Ghetera, which I hold to be the Gedera, or Gederothaïm of Joshua xv. 35, and el-Moghar, lie not far to the left. Shahhmeh has two old ponds, and traces of high antiquity. It now belongs to Shech Mosleh of Beit-Jebrîn. At Tina, too, although the present village is composed merely of clay huts, I saw a great many old stones lying about, which made me think that Tina might not impossibly be the Dilan of ver. 38, as there seems to be an agreement in name; and, if Mizpah be represented by Tell-es-Safiëh, then is the neighbourhood of the two places (for they are only an hour and a quarter distant from each other), in accordance with their connexion in the same passage of Scripture. Between Tina and Shahhmeh, and about half-way, we passed also a piece of raised ground with old stones and fragments of pottery, now ploughed over, near which an old solitary gate remains standing, the stones of which attest a high antiquity. This place is called by the people of the country El-Muheisin. Nor must I, considering the rarity of the thing, forget to speak of a small stream which wound its way at a short distance to the right of our road, but before we came to Shahh-

meh, turned off to the west, being a tributary probably of the Nahr-Ruben, which runs into the sea beside Jabneh.

Hadj Tahir proved to be the best guide I could have had in these districts. He is known in all the villages we happen to pass, and as a man, too, of high religious principle — religious of course according to the views of the Mussulmans—he is therefore everywhere treated with respect, in accordance with the ideas and customs of the professors of the Koran. Do we anywhere encounter a peasant in the fields, or do we meet with a travelling villager on his donkey, they at once call to him from a distance, "Ya Hadj Tahir!" (a mode of salutation among the Orientals); then follow benedictions and prayers for his welfare, with all that flowery adornment of words with which an Arabic address is set off. In the villages, something is always offered to Hadj Tahir; coffee, if I halt long enough to give them time for preparing it: otherwise, bread, figs, sour milk, a drink of water, or a fresh-filled pipe. So, also, at Ekron; the tent was hardly pitched on the west side of the village when we were at once surrounded by its aristocracy, with Shech Yousif at their head. One of the first things done, as soon as the tent is all right, is that Ferez lights a fire for his cooking operations, and gets the water which is for that purpose equally indispensable. But in this village the people served us with an alacrity that exceeded anything we had ever experienced before. All that we required, rice, milk, bread, chickens, eggs, appeared in a moment on a hint from Shech Yousif, and that not as in some places, at stranger's prices,

but as an effusion of hospitality. Already had I found at Beit-Jebrîn such a proof of Moslem hospitality; but at 'Akir this virtue was exercised in a much greater degree. I protested hard against the obligations that were laid upon me, but it was to no purpose; I had to bow to the laws of hospitality. It was the greatest glory of the Moslem to load travellers with benefits.

I find the experience of similar treatment in some books of travels, not only at Ekron, but also in other villages of this district, as if hospitality were one of its local peculiarities. I have nothing to say in the way of abatement; nevertheless it is plain to me, that this virtue stands intimately connected with the religion of the people. The inhabitants of these villages are no ordinary Mohammedans, indifferent about Mohammed and his doctrines, but belong rather to that class distinguished from the rest by the piety and scrupulosity of their religious zeal. Shech Yousif, who paid me an early visit this morning, spoke of this in high terms. "We are all dervishes," he said, "and Shech Mosleh of Beit-Jebrîn is so too. And now, you Christians, what have you to compare with a doctrine such as ours, and with a manner of life such as that which we lead? Where do you see men so virtuous as the dervishes? Where will you find such holy lives?"

The conversation having once been directed to this subject, I availed myself of the opportunity to speak to the shech and his numerous attendants of Christ and his doctrine. My tent was full of people; I sat on my carpet with the shech at the door, and a crowd of people were listening outside. First, I gave Shech

Yousif full opportunity to exalt the glory of his good works to the highest pitch. I then asked him as to the reward that Mohammed promises to saints like him, a number of sensual things, as is well known, just on this account so corrupting in principle that it tends to extinguish every spiritual feeling in man. "To sow, not to the flesh to reap corruption, but to the Spirit to reap life everlasting,"* is a thing unknown to the poor Mohammedan. I now tried to represent to those around me the wretchedness of their good works, as proceeding from all manner of impure and selfish principles, which although they remain unknown to men, nevertheless are naked and open to the eye of God. They willingly assented to my saying that a good deed cannot satisfy the justice of God, if it flow not from a good principle; that is, a principle that is pleasing to God. Thus we came gradually to the meaning of Isaiah lxiv. 6, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags: and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have carried us away." After that, as a consequence of this conviction, I spoke of the impossibility under which man lies, through sin, of justifying himself before God; and finally, of the provision which God himself has made for man, in the giving up of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, as an atonement for the sins of a fallen world, dying on the accursed tree of the cross, "that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Difficult as it was for these momentous topics to find a conveyance through the mouth of my youthful inter-

* Gal. vi. 8.

preter, I nevertheless found that all present listened with the utmost attention. If you ask me, whether they accepted Jesus, the Son of God, as the Redeemer, then I must answer, No, certainly not; to them this was absurdity and nonsense. How could it be otherwise in the depth of their superstition, and the errors of the false prophet? Let us only ask ourselves how slow in heart we are to believe, and truly we shall not wonder at the Moslem dervish when he shakes his head and refuses to believe. Nevertheless a first conversation with these people may result in shewing them the evil nature of man's corrupt heart, and, as a consequence, the fruitlessness of all their good works; the false peace into which they have been drugged by the narcotic poison of Mohammed is disturbed, the seared conscience is again quickened, and the disappointment which this discovery must bring upon them may and will powerfully co-operate in leading them to cry to God, "What shall I do to be saved?"

The shech and those who sat around him had much to allege against the culpable conduct of the Christians of the East, such as they see daily presented before their eyes. This gave me an opportunity of speaking to them of the necessity of a new heart and of the new birth, "without which no man can see the kingdom of God;" and of the distinction between merely nominal Christians and the true confessors of our Lord, a difference all the more readily comprehended, inasmuch as the same occurs among the Mussulmans themselves. In fine, I closed the discourse by distributing an Arabic tract, entitled "The Law and the Gospel,"

of which, to my no small satisfaction, I had some copies with me.

Will it bear any fruit?

This is known to God alone. To Him let it be committed.

You know, however, my friend, what obstacles stand in the way of a Mohammedan before he can confess Jesus Christ as his Saviour. The Koran punishes every apostate Moslem with the sword: this law is inexorable, and the Sultan himself is its assertor. What is the convinced disciple of the false prophet to do? Abjure him? thereupon he loses his head, and his widow and children forfeit all his possessions. It is true that from the first moment that the gospel was proclaimed by the blessed Author and Finisher of our faith, His disciples, like himself, were persecuted and put to death. Thousands and tens of thousands had to seal their confession of His name with their blood. To these the Lord gave power to triumph over the sword and fiery flames. In other cases He turned the hearts of the persecutors, and gave peace and power to the nations that were called after Him. He has made them great, and given them the dominion over the kingdoms of the world, in order that they may have the means and the might to send the gospel over the whole earth. Do the evangelical nations answer to this high call? Cheering answers greet our ears from hundreds of great and small missionary societies. Where Christians are persecuted, it becomes possible, by legitimate means, to stop persecution, and to protect disciples. But yet there are many millions that form a sad exception. To the follower of Mohammed

the glad tidings do not penetrate. The power of the Turks is indeed about to fall to pieces, the dominion of the "Protector" of the so-called "faithful" totters, and is upheld only by the mutual jealousies of Christian powers; but its bloody sword is still stretched out as formerly,—stretched out against every Mussulman that dares to call on the name of Jesus. To me it is a puzzle, full of darkness and mystery, how mighty Christian Britain, the Evangelical Netherlands, Prussia, and other Protestant states, should have hitherto looked with so much culpable indifference on this state of things. The whole west of Europe has been stirred up by the visit of a Gutzlaff to interest itself in the evangelisation of the heathens of China. For the freedom of single individuals the British Lion has been seen to rise up in wrath. The stormy and sandy extremity of South Africa, and many of the islands of the great Pacific Ocean, have been provided with missionary after missionary. To the Mohammedan alone the word of the gospel comes not! Has the Mohammedan, then, been cast out from the grace of God? Is Turkey accursed? Are her millions of Moslem subjects not worthy to have the gospel brought to them? Has Christ no interest in their salvation? Have they no claim on His atoning blood? Ah, how great is our guilt in having so little valued those for whom Christ died upon the cross! Let not people ask, Who, then, shall roll away for us the stone from the grave? who shall take away the penalty from the Koran, or deprive the Sultan of his sword?—Are not equally great difficulties opposed to the gospel in all parts of the world? We know that we wrestle not

against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.* But we know, also, that the battle is not ours, but the Lord's,† and that he giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.‡ How much has there not already been effected by the Christian efforts of Lord Stratford, the British Ambassador to Turkey! Who knows what glorious consequences might follow the efforts of the united Protestant kingdoms, if with their utmost earnestness they were to importune the Sultan for a firman, by which the Christians in his dominions should be not only unmolested and protected, but put upon a like footing and allowed equal privileges with the Mohammedan subjects, and, above all, by which these last should be allowed to embrace the gospel! That the Mohammedans have been the scourge wherewith it hath pleased God to chastise both Jews and Christians in the most terrible manner, has been taught us by our books of history from our very childhood. That God should visit evils upon them even as upon the Chaldeans who were of old employed as the instruments with which He chastened Israel, does not surprise us. And what evil can befall Turkey so great as that she herself should remain thus far at a distance from the gospel, although God's proclamation of mercy has been heard around her and in the midst of her? Yet while we adore the righteous punishments of God in the case of others with trembling, we have also to see to it that we do not set ourselves up as judges and executioners of wrath. Our vocation is, "Love your enemies, bless them that

* Eph. vi. 12. † 1 Sam. xvii. 47; 2 Chron. xx. 15. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 57.

curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you;" and "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for by so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head;" and "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." *

In the meantime, while our hope and prayer is that the Lord may give an open door to the poor worshipper of Mohammed, travellers in Palestine have to look well to it how they answer to their name as Christians. If their brief residence in these villages be to the honour of their Lord, they will not fail to leave a blessing behind them. It holds true among the Mohammedans as well as elsewhere, that example is better than precept. The many provocations, nevertheless, received from the inhabitants, and the inconveniences to which travellers are exposed, are no ordinary trials, and call for much patience. Let not this be forgotten.

Thus, then, did another Sunday pass. I was surrounded the whole day with visitors; still, having the hope that our conversations might be followed by some good, I felt my spirit less disturbed by the company of all these dervishes than would otherwise have been the case.

And what is the present aspect of the ancient Ekron? I still owe you an answer to this question. Well, then, of the royal Philistine city, first destined for Judah, but afterwards assigned to Dan,† yet not subdued,‡ there now remains nothing more than the place where it once stood. It is true there are still

* Matt. v. 44; Rom. xii. 20; Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15; John xv. 16. † Josh. xv. 45 and xix. 43. ‡ Judges i. 18, 19.

extant two large ancient wells, with walled sides and drinking-troughs, which Robinson has omitted mentioning in his description of Ekron; but although of high antiquity, still I am doubtful, judging by the form of the stones, whether they carry us back to the times of the Philistines. It is possible, however, that these wells were in existence when Ekron was in the hands of the Crusaders, as Akkaron. The houses of the present 'Akir are, like those of the other villages in Sephala, built with mud, mixed with loose round stones, just as they are found in the plain; but the durable, colossal building materials, quarried out of the mountain limestone, were not used here, probably on account of the difficulty of the carriage. How easily such mud walls, even when daubed over with lime, are thrown down by heavy rains, hail, and high winds, is represented to us in the 13th chap. of the Prophecies of Ezekiel (ver. 10-15). The prophets of Israel that seduced the people by saying peace when there was no peace, were likened by the Lord to such mud walls.

From 'Akir the ark of the Lord was brought back to Beth-Shemesh, which lies at the foot of the mountains, at only three and a half hours' distance, with the golden offerings of five Philistine princes, according to the number of their cities. The history of Ekron and that of Ashdod and Gath is remarkable. While the house of Obed-edom was blessed on account of the ark,* that same ark, the emblem of the Divine presence, became a curse to his enemies. At Ekron there was a deadly disease, and "the hand of the Lord was sore."† And so it is still. Of those who truly seek the Lord

* 2 Sam. vi. 10-12. † 1 Sam. v.

there is not one who does not testify with Asaph:—"It is good for me to draw near to God;"* but there is not one also who has not constantly to bear in mind the words of the apostle—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked;—it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; for our God is a consuming fire."†

Philistia was a perpetual stumbling-block to Israel, on account of her divinations and deceits. Isaiah reproaches them with being soothsayers like the Philistines,‡ and in Ahaziah we see a deplorable example of the idolatry with which the Philistines infected Israel. In spite of the express command,—"Thou shalt be upright before the Lord thy God. For these nations which thou shalt inherit hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners; but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do,"§—Ahaziah, in his sickness, sent messengers unto Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to inquire whether he should recover of his disease.‖ His apostasy cost him his life, his own life and those of two of his captains of fifty. Baal-zebub, that is, the god of flies, is a name that gives me no surprise after visiting Ekron. The flies, in fact, swarm so innumerably that I can hardly eat my food without these troublesome insects getting into it. Palestine is, as a whole, grievously plagued with flies, but especially the lower parts of it. Confidence in Baal-zebub led at last to the destruction of Ekron itself. "Ekron," says Zechariah, "shall be ashamed for her expectation."¶ The Lord, according to the

* Ps. lxxiii. 28. † Gal. vi. 7; Heb. x. 31; xii. 29. ‡ Isa. ii. 6.
§ Deut. xviii. 13, 14. ‖ 2 Kings i. 2–6. ¶ Zech. ix. 5.

word of Amos, has turned his hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines; it has perished, and Ekron, as Zephaniah predicted, has been "rooted up."*

Now I must lay down the pen. I see Shech Yousif coming here with no small troop of dervish friends, who passed this morning with flags and drums, on a pilgrimage to the neighbouring grave of a Moslem saint, and who, to complete this amusement, are to-night to be the guests of the 'Akir village chief. As they appear to have a visit to the tent in their eye, I close my portfolio.

JERUSALEM, *15th April.*

Little did I think, my dear friend, that so many days would elapse before I should be able to write to you. I now for the first time take up my pen again, to commence with you my journey to Gaza, and from thence back to Jerusalem. When I lately left Ekron, it was in the hope of my return to the Holy City before Good Friday evening (the 9th curt.) Back I did come that evening, but not to keep the feast of the Resurrection on Easter-day with the multitude in Zion's church; no, I lay stretched on a bed of sickness, suffering much pain, and to-day, for the first time, I am so far recovered as to be able to resume my correspondence. You see that trials of every kind are appointed me; yet I know that nothing happens fortuitously, or without the will of God—

> He who our whole condition knows,
> Holds, too, the scale of all our woes,
> And sees what measure of distress
> Best fits us for heaven's happiness.

* Amos i. 8; Zeph. ii. 4.

Therefore will I not complain; but endeavour to go forward with fresh courage, thankful for all the loving-kindness and the help I have received in my sickness.

And now let me inform you how matters have fared with me since leaving Ekron.

The Monday morning dawned with a disappointment. Tahir came to tell me that his mare had run off, and thus he could no longer be my guide. He had looked out, however, for a substitute,—a certain Ali, formerly a soldier in the army of Ibrahim Pasha, and who, as he assured me, was well acquainted with this district. That the mare may have run off was possible enough; but the old Hadj ought not on that account to have left me; he might without much difficulty have provided himself with another horse, and his friends would soon have traced and seen to the safety of his mare. But I saw plainly that he had no liking for the journey to Gaza, and I could not use force. Accordingly I had to commit myself to the guidance of Ali, a braggart of the loudest description, infected with all the impudence and roughness characteristic of a soldier of Egypt, or of Turkey. And as respected his knowledge of ancient localities, I could put little confidence in him; yet I hoped to be able to verify his statements, by comparing them with those of the people we might meet on the way.

The sun had just risen above the still purple-tinted range of the mountains of Judea, when we exchanged "ma-Salameh's" with Shech Yousif, and left Ekron. We proceeded along the range of rocky hills to the west, passing the village of el-Moghar, situated at the end of these eminences. I asked if there was any cave

there from which the village el-Moghar (cavern or grotto) derived its name, and received for answer that there were a number of small grottoes about the place.

"Have you no knowledge of a large cave any way hereabouts?" I asked, with an eye to Makkedah.

"Yes, indeed, at Sûmeil, or if you turn more towards the east, at Dhikkrîn and Deir-Dubbâ'n."

Those three villages lie near enough in a straight line east and west from each other. Sûmeil lies about two and a half hours from Deir-Dubbâ'n. One would almost suppose that the caves of the three villages had communication one with another, or at least approach very near to each other. That either Sûmeil or Dhikkrîn represents Makkedah, is probable. At least, after many inquiries at different places, I have heard nothing of other caves in the Sephala.

As soon as we were past el-Moghar and the rocky heights just mentioned, the sea-coast came in sight. Jabneh, or Jebna, an important village, lay at barely an hour's distance on the right hand. This is probably the Jabneel of Josh. xv. 11, the extreme north-west frontier point of the inheritance of Judah. In our south-western course we passed, an hour and five minutes after leaving Ekron, the now dry bed of the Nahr-Ruben, which much resembles the Aujeh river to the north of Jaffa. My map will hereafter give you the sites of the villages Beit-Shid and Bargha, through which we passed, and also of the ruins and tells in this district.

Esdûd, the ancient Ashdod, we gained, after having ridden steadily three and a half hours since leaving Ekron. It is a miserable village, yet has a very pic-

turesque site, on a small eminence, surrounded by olive-grounds and orchards. The date-palms overtopping the other trees, and two large pools at the foot of the village, contribute their share to the picturesque appearance of the place.

On account of the great distance which I wanted to accomplish to-day, I had left 'Akir without taking breakfast. Thus far the morning had been pleasant and refreshing; but now the heat of the day began to be felt, and was not a little aggravated by a sirocco. I halted, therefore, for an hour under the delicious shade of the olive-trees outside the village, and here we had breakfast speedily prepared on a fire of dried cactus leaves, of which the garden-enclosures gave us a large supply. I could have willingly spent the whole day under the foliage: there it was refreshing; beyond it, however, the sun shone fiercely; and, to add still farther to my troubles, I was suffering that day from an illness, which, as yet, I have said nothing about to you, but which, nevertheless, had for the last three or four days rendered my travelling very difficult. I had been troubled with painful boils, that made riding on horseback absolute torture. Was this a consequence of the heat and the fatigues I had undergone on my journey to the Dead Sea? I know not. It was probably so, however, and is by no means a rare phenomenon in this country. A proof of that is seen in the plague of emerods which first began at Ashdod, when the ark of the Lord was placed in the house of Dagon, and which became a scourge to the whole Philistian plain (1 Sam. v. and vi. 1-17). My eyes also were inflamed, which, if not exactly caused by the measuring of angles

in the intense glare of the sun, was at least very much aggravated by it. On resuming our journey, the hot sirocco had increased, and blew right in our faces. For nearly two hours we had to ride through the plain, where beautiful corn-fields lay on our way, but where nothing—not even a single olive-tree, mitigated the wearisome uniformity, and the scorching heat of our sunny path. In the distance, here and there, a single lonely village shewed itself, a heap of mud huts, hardly to be recognised as human habitations. I saw, likewise, some tells, on which there had formerly stood fortresses; but, taken as a whole, the Sephala is a thinly inhabited and cultivated plain. The long road from Ekron to Gaza, which runs at about one hour's distance from and parallel to the coast, is one of the most wearisome, and about the warmest, that one can travel in Palestine. I would recommend to any one who may wish to travel it, so to make his arrangements as not to follow it from north to south, but rather from Gaza to Ekron, so as not to have the sun in his face, as happened with us to-day—an evil well worth a man's putting himself to some trouble to avoid.

My thoughts were led, by all that surrounded me, to "the burthen of the Philistines" which the Lord proclaimed by his prophets.* Truly has that fearful sentence of punishment been fully executed:—"Behold, I will stretch out my hand (saith the Lord) upon the Philistines, and I will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the sea-coast. And I will execute great vengeance upon them, with furious rebukes."

* Jer. xxv. 20; xlvii. 1–7; Ezek. xxv. 15–17.

And the reasons are remarkable that God gives for doing this:—"Because the Philistines have dealt by revenge, and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy for the old hatred." The Philistines were, in God's hand, like the Chaldeans, a rod of punishment for Israel; but the Lord did not, on that account, hold them blameless. On the contrary, the distinction that He makes between the judgments on His people Israel and on them, is this: of Israel, notwithstanding the most unexampled judicial punishments, there would be preserved a remnant to which the Lord promised that His loving-kindnesses should be great; as for the remnant of the Philistines, on the contrary, it was thus:—"It shall perish," saith the Lord;* and, again:—"Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea-coasts, the nation of the Cherethites! the word of the Lord is against you: O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee, that there will be no inhabitant. And the sea-coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks;"† and, again: "I will cut off the pride of the Philistines."‡ It is true that the land of Israel, too, has been laid waste and trodden down; but its remains are still extant, and only wait on the word of the Lord in order to return to its own proper owners in a state of blessedness such as never was known before. "Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee."§ Nothing could have been

* Amos i. 8.
† Zeph. ii. 5, 6.
‡ Zech. ix. 6.
§ Jer. xlvi. 28.

made more completely an end of than the Philistines and their remnant. They, and all their power, have been utterly rooted out of the earth.

The maps of Robinson and Kiepert, and also the one of Zimmerman in imitation of the former, have placed the villages of Hamameh and Medjdel on the road from Ashdod to Askelon, in exactly the reverse position. Where they put Medjdel stands Hamameh, and their Hamameh stands in the place of Medjdel. Having left Ashdod, one arrives after a ride of about two hours at Hamameh, and thirty-five minutes later at Medjdel, probably the Migdal-gad of Joshua xv. 37. Both villages are surrounded by extensive gardens and orchards, so that even the road from Hamameh to Medjdel is quite sheltered; and how grateful to me the shade afforded by those beautiful trees is more than I can describe. It was now about noon, and the heat intolerable. My guide, too, the restless Ali, seemed quite done out by it, and suggested to me that as we had accomplished six clever hours, we should pitch the tent at Medjdel. And truly I regretted afterwards not having followed his advice. I should not in that case have so overfatigued myself, and might perhaps have saved myself the illness that followed. Medjdel, too, was a place well adapted for our remaining for the night. It is a considerable village, with a large bazaar, a proud mosque, and lofty minaret, and in passing I observed ancient relics that seemed worthy of an attentive examination. But I was impatient to reach Gaza, and accordingly we struck into a road from Medjdel to the shore, which is separated from it by a distance of only about twenty-five minutes,

and where the sand of the downs now blows over the ruins of the once renowned and strongly fortified Askelon. The gardens of Medjdel extend the distance of a quarter of an hour towards the sea-side; one then gets upon the white downs, under which in all probability no small part of the royal Philistinian city lies buried. A single shaft of a pillar that rises above the sand serves now as a beacon to apprize the passing traveller that here stood Askelon.

Ibrahim Pasha, whom the favourable position of Medjdel did not escape, caused a powerful battery to be constructed on this road, for repelling any attack that might be made from the sea. My guide, Ali, who happened to be there at the time, told me that this battery had been formed of the stones of the ruins of Askelon. The European intervention, however, drove the Egyptian general out of Palestine, and the Arabs, being those who were most curbed by Ibrahim, hastened to pull down his not yet completed battery, and scattered the stones all about the place. Nothing but the ruined walls of his fort now remain.

The ruins of the Askelon of a later date, that which was so embellished by Herod the Great (it having been the birthplace of that prince and of his son Antipater), and which cost so much bloody warfare between Saracens and Crusaders and Crusaders and Saracens, lie immediately on the strand, upon and against the heights formed by the low hills along the sea. They exhibit a medley of pieces of wall, huge building stones, fragments of columns, marble, granite, porphyry, and limestone rubbish, in prodigious heaps, in the midst of which some poor-looking huts have been put together,

which still preserve the name of Askelán. They are surrounded by a few scanty gardens, which lie half waste. In one of those gardens stands a Mohammedan Weli, under the shade of the foliage; and the old gray-bearded watchman, who seems inclined to end his days within these holy precincts, offers the passing traveller a drink of water from a primeval well. The prophecies against the Philistines make special mention of Askelon; you will be able to find them in the passages of Scripture already referred to. Askelon has indeed become "a desolation," and such a desolation as, like that of Cesarea, makes a deep impression by its extent, and by the enormously heavy thick masses of wall that are still left. The castle, in particular, which is quadrangular in form, and situated on a rising ground, shews in its gigantic remains what Askelon must once have been, and how dreadful must have been its overthrow.

Beneath the roof of a small forsaken khân, built on a height of perhaps 100 feet above the sea, I sat for half an hour, musing in silence over Askelon's fate. Among the many things which make me regret my long forced march to Gaza, I must reckon my having left Askelon without having taken any sketch of its remarkable ruins. But you may well suppose how pain, fatigue, and intolerable heat deprived me of all comfort and energy.

"Which way shall we take from this to Gaza?" asked Ali; "that along the shore, or that away from it?"

The inner road, which runs parallel with the shore, but at three quarters of an hour's distance from it, had

been already described by others; I therefore gave the preference to that which was least known. And our ride along the sea seemed quite to suit Ali, for he made no apology for taking advantage of it by remaining continually behind in order to enjoy a bath. The mare which he rode patiently kept on with us while her master was splashing in the water. I would not advise any one, however, to take the shore road to Gaza, on account of the heavy sand and the shells and small stones, through which horses advance with great difficulty. All that I gained by this road was a correct drawing of the line of coast, which is notably different from that given in the existing maps.

The hot wind happily began to decrease; yet the heat was no less scorching than before. Nor did the nearness of the sea give any coolness; on the contrary, the sun was reflected in the foam of the surf with innumerable flickerings of light, owing to which my already inflamed eyes for three long hours had nothing to turn to but sunlight and the reflection of sunlight. The motion of my horse, too, became more and more painful as the poor animal's fatigue increased. At last I could hardly advance at all. How we reached Gaza, I really cannot tell. After four and three-quarter hours' slow progress, however, of which the last three quarters led inland, as Gaza lies at that distance from the sea, I could get seated on my travelling carpet. It was now five o'clock: we had been in the saddle since six A.M., with no more rest than an hour in the olive gardens of Ashdod and half an hour at Askelon, and with no more refreshment than breakfast at the former place, and a draught of

water from the old Moslem at the well at Askelon; and, in addition to all this, a body full of pain, the sun the whole day in my eyes, and the enervating, scorching sirocco blowing upon me.

Thus did I reach Gaza, at present a considerable town among extensive olive groves, and lying, as it were, in a basin formed by sandy downs. My tent stood pitched amid the houses at a place where people were busy excavating old building stones. The spot seems the usual encamping ground for native travellers, chiefly those who carry on trade between Egypt and Syria. Not that I found any of them there, but they had left proofs of their presence—the ground was teeming with vermin, of which, alas! I became aware only when too late. I would willingly have encamped outside the town, but people assured me that I should not be safe from plunderers, being there beyond the protection of the Governor of Gaza.

I had now advanced thus far, but still I was not at the end of my journey; and want of time compelled me to make my tarrying here very short. As soon as I was sufficiently re-invigorated by a few hours' rest and a meal, I had myself announced to the Governor, my firman and mandatory letter from the Pasha of Jerusalem being at the same time exhibited. I did not find him in his serai, but with the Mufti or high priest, who, as afterwards appeared, is at present the principal personage in Gaza, while the Governor, a stupid, corpulent Turk, who had come to the place not long before, and did not yet understand Arabic, seemed to have little to say. Whatever else this Metzellim might have brought from Constantinople, he certainly

had brought none of the usual Turkish politeness. He seemed one of the most insignificant persons I had ever met with; thus, for example, he was not ashamed to acknowledge that it was not in his power to give me an escort next day to the Wadi-Sheri'ah, to which I wanted to go in search of the ruins of Gerar. He did not refuse to give me some armed guides to accompany me; but he declared that he could not answer for the consequences of an encounter with the Bedouïns encamped there. One of the chief things that made me anxious to visit Gaza, was to find the site of Gerar; but I had no desire to trust myself among hostile Bedouïns without a sufficient escort. Moreover, the Governor constantly referred me to "mufti-effendim" (his reverence the high priest), to whose leading-strings he let me plainly see he was tied. I clearly saw that whatever I wished to know I had to ask from the Mufti, and, alas! in the matters in which I felt most interested, he, too, seemed to be not overburthened with understanding. Nevertheless he promised, as he was little acquainted personally with the ancient localities of the district, to find out for me some persons who on this point were quite at home, and to whose information I could trust. All the further assistance I asked from the Gaza authorities was that on my paying for it, two kavasses should be sent to keep watch at my tent during the night.

On the following morning the men that had been promised for the purpose of giving me the information I wanted, appeared early at my tent. What they had to communicate was of very little consequence. With respect to Gerar I learned that there is a site called

Um-el-Gerar, situated a short half-hour to the north of the Tell-Jema, about three hours from Gaza, and about the same distance from the sea. It is true there are no ruins on the spot; nevertheless it is evident from some scattered stones that it is the site of an ancient city. Old wells, too, there are none; but the place abounds with water, so that the Arabs find little trouble in digging for it. Besides this, there is a never-failing spring. After all, however much I might have been disposed to visit Gerar on the way, the suffering condition of my body altogether prevented me. For a moment I thought of remaining at Gaza, but my complaint was not of such a kind as that one or two days' rest could be expected to remove it; and Gaza, with its tropical climate, was no place for me to remain long encamped at it. On the contrary, I longed to get back to Jerusalem, that I might enjoy a cool and salubrious atmosphere, and such care and restoratives as my state of ill-health required. I gave orders accordingly to strike the tent, and to load the mules. The mukhari was, with Ferez, to go on before, and to wait for me under the olive grove to the north-east of the city. I knew that the loading would occupy some time, and so rode to the hill el-Montar, situated half an hour to the south-east of Gaza, and whence is obtained a splendid view of the whole surrounding country. Here once more I put up my surveying instrument; but since this the inflammation of my eyes has prevented me from taking any measurements between Gaza and Jerusalem. In order to have a correct idea of the ancient position of Gaza, the ruins of which probably lie sunk under the sand between the

present city and the sea,* one cannot do better than go to the hill el-Montar. Even the Gaza of the present time, with its four large mosques and minarets, with its low eminence in the middle of the city, on which formerly the Romans built a fortress—Gaza, with its irregularly divided wards, its uncovered streets, its waving date-palms, and magnificent olive enclosures—Gaza, a town without walls, but of considerable extent, is seen to great advantage from el-Montar. Turning the eye towards the south, the view stretches over the northern part of the wilderness. Tell-Jema, in the south-west, is a very conspicuous point in that wide and solitary plain. One can follow for some distance from the sea to the south-east the course of the Wadi-Sherî'ah; then the winter torrent loses itself in the misty blue of the wilderness of Beer-Sheba. In the south-east and north-east there is a mingling of low hills, still green at present with herbage and plants, but in summer a dry tract, not inappropriately described as a desert.† A few villages are met with in the neighbourhood; a few more, of which Beit-Hanûn is the largest, appear somewhat further off; one or two tells also, and, in fine, in the far distance the blue mountains of Judea.

The hill el-Montar, called thus after a Moslem weli built on its top, is, in my opinion, the same to which Samson conveyed the gates of the city, "the top of the hill which is within sight of Hebron."‡ Hebron itself, of course, is not to be seen from el-Montar; but by Hebron in this passage of Scripture, it

* See *Narrative of a Mission to the Jews*, &c. p. 103.

† Acts viii. 26.

‡ Judges xvi. 3.

strikes me, is meant "the mountains of Hebron;" for otherwise Samson, had he run night and day from the time of his flight from Gaza, could only have come on the evening of the following day within sight of the city of Hebron. The city gate of Gaza was in those days probably not less than three quarters of an hour distant from the hill el-Montar. To have climbed to the top of this hill with the ponderous doors and their bolts on his shoulders, through a road of thick sand, was a feat which none but a Samson could have accomplished.

You have, no doubt, observed that the tract of country which I have traversed since leaving Beit-Jebrîn, or even earlier still, from Lechiëh, had placed me wholly on the scene of Samson's achievements. Zorah, his birthplace, and Timnath, the town where he took to wife a daughter of the Philistines, lay immediately on my right hand at the foot of the hills when I was on my way from Beit-Jebrîn to Ekron. It was at Askelon that Samson struck his first blow at his enemies. The district betwixt Gaza and the mountains of Judea was often trodden by the dreaded man. Here at Gaza we stood at his grave. The Word of God assures us (Heb. xi. 32) that through faith he triumphed, "so that the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." "He cried unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him." * But not the less is Samson a lamentable example of the consequences that arise from departing from God. Whosoever contemplates him when slaying the lion, or the thousand Philistines at Lechi, and then again, after he had departed

* Judges xvi. 28–30.

from God, and God from him, "weak and as another man," "with his eyes put out," "grinding in the prison-house, and bound with fetters of brass," may well be convinced how necessary it is for us to pray without ceasing:

"Lord! incline my heart to fear thy name!"

The place is still shewn from whence Samson must have carried off the gates of the city, and close to it there is a weli, where the Mohammedans believe that God's Nazarite lies buried. The Scriptures, however, tell us that "his brethren and all the house of his father came down and took him, and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father." *

Gaza, the Gazera of the Crusaders, and Guzzeh of the Arabs, although a strongly fortified place, and deriving importance through all ages from its being the chief station on the great caravan road from Syria to Egypt, has never attained to the consideration of the Phœnician cities Sidon or Tyre. What Gaza wanted was a harbour. It is true that in former times there was a small seafaring town in its immediate neighbourhood on the shore, which, in different authors, appears as Maiomia, Maiumas, or Menois, after Minos, King of Crete,† and Jerome will even have it to be the Madmannah of Joshua xv. 31. Be that as it may, this town had no harbour to afford protection to the shipping. In these days there is at that very place a small village called en-Nesli, with a small lighthouse and a flag-staff, yet there is nothing that can be called a haven or a roadstead; the vessels lie quite in the open sea,

* Judges xvi. 31. † According to Dapper.

and owing to the gradual slope of the land, at a great distance from the shore, where their boats must make their own way through the surf. The maps, indeed, delineate this coast as having bays that seem to afford some shelter for shipping; but this is incorrect, for the shore runs for the length of several hours past en-Nesli in a straight line, without forming any bays or creeks. At a quarter of an hour's distance to the north of this little village the ruins of a tower are seen on the shore. Was this once a lighthouse or a fort? Ali called the ruin en-Nkiëh.

In history Gaza plays not the least important part under the Philistines. How could it have been otherwise, seeing it is the key of the country? The chief disasters which have befallen Gaza, and have had the greatest influence on its fate, besides what is mentioned in Scripture, were its conquest by Alexander the Great, by the Saracens, in A.D. 634, and by Saladin, A.D. 1187. The Crusaders, meanwhile, had occupied it, and in 1152 had strengthened it with a castle. Gaza must have flourished anew in the 14th century; travellers of that date speak of it as a city double the size of Jerusalem, and at the commencement of the 17th century it was called the largest city in Palestine. Even at the present day it is a respectable town, containing a population of 16,000 inhabitants. Among these there are only a few Christians, and those mostly of the Greek-Catholic Church. Gaza is pleasantly distinguished from the other cities in this country by the absence of walls and ramparts.

With regret at being obliged to leave this place not half satisfied, I struck into the road leading to the

olive-grove to the north-east of the town. My people were already waiting there, and we now started all together for Jerusalem.

I will not detain you with lamentations over the sufferings I endured on the road. The heat, indeed, was less, and the sun no longer right in my face, but the consequences of the forced march of the preceding day now made themselves seriously felt. With every half-hour's advance the pain was more severe, and the riding more intolerable. At last, about three o'clock in the afternoon I could hold out no longer; the exertion had exhausted me, a hot fever came over me, and I was compelled to dismount and lie down on the road-side. We found ourselves here at the foot of a tell, which Ali called Tell-Imji, lying a little to the north of Tell-Hessé, and about south-east of Um-Lakis. This is also a sort of tell, and probably the site of Lachis, the royal Canaanitish city of Joshua xii. 11, whose king was hanged by Joshua at the cave of Makkedah (Josh. x. 3–27); here Amaziah was slain by his people, who had leagued themselves against him;* and here we also find the armies of the kings of Syria and Assyria at the time of Jerusalem's being besieged by them.† Robinson, however, gives little credit to this identification. The ancient Eglon,‡ of which nothing more than some pot-sherds and some scattered broken stones remains under the name of 'Ajlân, lies also in this neighbourhood.

Half an hour's rest so far revived me that I was in

* 2 Kings xiv. 19; 2 Chr. xxv. 27.

† 2 Kings xviii. 14, 17, &c.; Jer. xxxiv. 7.

‡ Joshua xii. 12; x. 31–36; xv. 39.

a condition to proceed at a very slow rate. Fortunately we were not far from a Bedouïn camp, which lay concealed among the low hills to the right of the road. Ali was well acquainted with this tribe, and assured me I would be perfectly safe among them. Thitherwards, then, I turned aside, and ordered my tent to be pitched.

The Bedouïns received me with a friendliness that greatly struck me. Here there was nothing to suit their taste, no contract, no presents, no baksheesh, nothing but a sick traveller who sought an asylum among them. Neither was there any haughty shech, like Abû Dahûk, to annoy me with his clumsy civility, for the old shech had lately died, and the young one, his son, a youth of fifteen, was quite a child. But the sympathising looks and kind attentions with which these sons of the desert received me, had something in it so natural and unaffected as to make me observe with no small feeling how much there remains, even in the wild, half savage man, that is excellent, and speaks of his divine origin.

Coffee was immediately prepared for me while they were pitching the tent. Water was already beginning to be scarce in the district; the winter rains were long since past; but the Bedouïns freely shared with us their own small supply. Others assisted in the putting up of the tent, so that I was soon enabled to stretch myself out on my camp-bed. Now, the temptation to satisfy their curiosity was great indeed. Probably they had never before been brought into such near connexion with a traveller; yet, no sooner had I ex-

plained to them that there was nothing I was so much in need of as rest, than they no longer came near me, not even during the whole following day, while the fever kept me remaining among them. I was encamped among those poor Bedouïns in the utmost possible security. When at last, on the third day, I rode away, I felt quite sorry to think that I could not express to them how much I appreciated their kind attention and hospitality. Do not, meanwhile, suppose that I failed to acknowledge the hand of Him who thus supported me and protected me in time of need. Though I was suffering from pain, and distressed with fever, still there was much to mitigate and to cheer. Thus, for example, there blew a cool refreshing west wind all the time that I was here. How much more severe would my sufferings have been, had a sirocco been blowing, which would have made much worse my remaining in the warm tent! In the discreet and friendly behaviour, too, of the Bedouïns, I must thankfully own the finger of God.

On the third day after leaving Gaza I reached Beit-Jebrîn about noon. The Bedouïn camp was only at three hours' distance from it. I was not yet restored to health; but owing to the rest I had enjoyed, my pain had this day become endurable. I was in a condition also to take proper notes of the ruins that lie along this road, among which, however, I found nothing of sufficient importance to occupy you with at present. There now remained eight hours' travelling before reaching Jerusalem; and I thought, that after having rested during the heat of the day at Beit-Jebrîn,

I would be able to proceed some hours further in the afternoon, in order to make the following day's travelling less fatiguing. Beit-Netîf is highly spoken of by Robinson as a halting-place for travellers; and there, accordingly, I meant to encamp for the night. A guide now appeared unnecessary. Ali's soldier's manners I had become pretty tired of, so that it was with no regret that I dispensed with his further services at Beit-Jebrîn. Well, then, we struck from the ancient Eleutheropolis into a valley which runs north-north-east, and north by east, and which seems to me to have been the ancient highway from thence to Nicopolis (Emmaus). Kudna and Deir-Dubbâ'n lay on the left. I regretted much I could not climb the high tell of Jedeideh, for the view from that elevated point must be of great importance for the topographical knowledge of the country. But I was prevented from attempting it by the state of my health. We now proceeded for an hour and three quarters along hill-slopes, which were strewed with building-stones, pieces of columns, and similar ancient remains. The way then turned towards the west, and I saw that I had acted foolishly in proceeding without a guide. The path that led to Beit-Netîf I now perceived we had already passed, and it was not long before we found ourselves at the village of 'Ajûr, which is quite out of the proper course. Here we asked for the way to Beit-Netîf; but we again missed it. First, we had to go down by a steep track, along the slippery rocks, then up again, then round the crown of a high conical hill called Tell-Zakarîya, and now down again, along a narrow frightful path, to a deep valley called

Wadi-Sumt,* at this part nearly twenty minutes broad, on the farther side of which there stands a poor hamlet, which, under the name of Kefr-Zakarîya, represents the Caphar-Zacharia of Sosomenos' *Eccles. Hist.* ix. 17. I had now been wandering round for four hours, and was an hour past Beit-Netif. Here, then, I resolved to spend the night, and comforted myself with the thought that I should have only five hours' riding next day, in order to get to Jerusalem. But my errings and wanderings were not yet at an end. The Shech of the village, a place lying quite out of the common track of travellers, asked me to pitch the tent on the east side of the hamlet, close to a fountain. Here stands a monument to the prophet Zacharia, as the Mohammedans pretend that this is his burying-place, although this village is not the Beit-Zacharia, the residence of the man of God, which Josephus mentions. The Shech himself kept watch at my tent, that none of his people might venture to approach it. Had I been dependent on his vigilance, however, it would have little availed me; he slept outside, against the side of my tent, sound and well, during the whole night, while I lay on my couch, kept awake by pain. Of the hospitality which is said to be so characteristic of this district, I saw nothing. The few articles which we required for our supper and breakfast we were made to pay for at three times their value. When we started the next morning, the Shech would not allow us to wander out of the way again, but accompanied us on horseback, until he said that it was impossible further to miss the "derb-Sultan" (the

* Identified by Robinson with the valley of Elah, 1 Sam. xvii. 1–3.

highway) to Jerusalem. Think, however, what was my disappointment when, before we had proceeded ten minutes from his leaving us at a certain hill called Tell-Ermûd,* we came to a large village lying at the entrance of a valley; and when, in answer to our inquiry what was its name, we were told: Beit-Netîf. What, Beit-Netîf!—We had thus ridden for an hour backwards instead of forwards! And had I now only had the good fortune to fall upon the real highway to Jerusalem! But the one mistake seemed to lead to the other. Ten full hours was I on the road in travelling between Kefr-Zakarîya and Jerusalem, along all sorts of untrodden paths, now down in a valley, then over rocks, past the ruins of Dâmûn,† and through the villages Stefân, Jerash, Deir-el-Ghafar, and Chereibîn. That this journey subjected me anew to much sharp pain, you may well suppose. At last Bethlehem came in sight. Passing Beit-jala and Rachel's tomb, I reached the convent Mar-Elias. I had here to rest for half an hour by the way-side, to collect my energies for the accomplishment of the last hour of my journey, and thanked God when at last, in the house of Max Ungar, I could stretch myself on my bed.

* The Jarmuth of Joshua xv. 35. Robinson passed here by a village called Yarmûk.

† I consider this the Dammim of 1 Sam. xvii. 1.

ONCE MORE AT JERUSALEM.

JERUSALEM, 16*th April.*

THE post does not leave before the 19th, so that I have still some time to add a few lines to the letter which I broke off yesterday. Had I been able to carry out my own intentions, I should have visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Good Friday evening, in order for once to have been an eye-witness of the scandals that are enacted there on that festival; I should after that have joined on Easter-day the thanksgivings and praises of the congregation on Mount Zion; and that nothing might be forgotten, I should on the following Monday have followed the thousands of pilgrims to the Jordan, in order to have seen that part of their proceedings in the Holy Land also with my own eyes. But my lot was ordered otherwise. I lay in solitude on my sick-bed. Of the great number of travellers who, on the occasion of the feast of the Resurrection, were present in the Zion Church, and of the parting discourse preached by Bishop Gobat, I saw and heard nothing, but had to be content with the short account given me of it by my landlord; and as for the thousands of pilgrims assembled in this city during the week before Easter, I saw only a shadow of them when, a week ago, on entering the Jaffa gate, I found the streets through which I had to pass to my lodgings literally crammed with men, camels, horses, and mules.

It was a bustle like that of a great fair, joyous and uproarious; nothing, in short, could have been less in harmony with the occasion of the feast. Happily those days do not last long. As soon as each has washed away his last remaining sins in the Jordan, and dipped in the water a piece of garment which is to serve afterwards for his shroud, by way of passport through purgatory, the collected multitude leave the Holy City; the pilgrimage has then been accomplished, and Jerusalem returns to its wonted condition. Now, on looking back, I consider it well not to have attended any part of this feast. From the little specimen that I saw the other evening when with the Crawfords in the Church of the Sepulchre, I can well suppose what the rest must have been. Had I been there on Good Friday eve, I might perhaps have had my share of the strokes which the Turkish guards distribute with their whips in order to keep the crowd in order, or in the thrusts and kicks which nevertheless take place, and which to many prove mortal, so much so that we are assured that on the Good Friday of 1834, more than 300 persons were killed. You are probably acquainted with the revolting exhibition of the Greek fire; why, then, should I detain you by saying anything about that gross abomination? Year after year, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, are these scandalous scenes repeated.* Much

* In a letter from a friend at Jerusalem, dated June 1853, the following occurs:—"We had again the annual blasphemy of the 'Holy Fire.' I did not go to the church to see it, but I met some excited fanatics running wildly through the streets, with bundles of lighted tapers triumphantly stretched out, and women were dipping their hands in, and rubbing their faces with, the flame.

"I heard also of another farce, in the washing of beggars' feet by the Latin Patriarch. My informant, the bishop, told me that they dip

is there that changes on this ever-changing earth; but some things seem to last very long. Alas! man, left to himself, sold under sin, changes not, unless it be from bad to worse. So, too, on the pretended place of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. It was truly an invention of Satan, to bring together under one roof different sects, all calling themselves Christians after the Saviour of the world, and so to kindle the flame of mutual rivalry in their hearts as to which should possess these so-called holy places. How much blood has flowed from this cause, and how much reviling has been poured on Christ by the Mohammedans on account of it! And what may not this contest yet produce? It would appear that it is not only some hundred Greeks and Romanists, some Armenian and Coptic Christians, that devour each other about the possession of the holy places—it is not only the fraudulent trafficking that is carried on by those sects with one another and with the Turks about that possession;* but the strife threatens to extend still further, and it may not be long before nations and kingdoms shall assemble their forces against one another, and go to war for the appropriation to themselves of the alleged

handkerchiefs in the water *after* use, and the remainder is stored in bottles, and used as medicine for the sick. So low does Satan love to degrade his victims."

* One finds in various books of travels instances of the frauds by means of which the different parties have tried to purchase from the Turks this property. C. de Bruyn, among others, mentions that the King of Spain, at whose cost the Romish convent at Jerusalem was kept up, had placed at the disposition of its procurator the sum of 400,000 rixdollars, for the purpose of having the Holy Sepulchre swindled into the hands of the Romanists; but that the Greeks had hitherto contrived to defeat all such attempts.

Sepulchre of Jesus.* Striking, truly, is the contrast between what the true grave of Jesus effects when beheld by the spiritual eye, and what is brought about by the pretended grave when beheld by that of the flesh.

With my return to Jerusalem my small caravan has undergone some change. The contract with my muleteer being now at an end, he is the first that marches off. The hire of horses and mules has, owing to the number of travellers who have lately arrived, risen from ten to fifteen piastres each per day. My mukhari was, accordingly, well pleased to be relieved of his contract with me; and as respects myself I have no feeling of regret on that account, for although all mukharis have the character of being very troublesome, yet I imagine that the one who has been travelling with me, since my leaving 'Akka, is one of the worst ruffians to be found in the country. But I confess he has had a difficult job of it in going to all those out of the way places. What, however, is to me a matter of more regret, Ferez has left me, in consequence of his having heard of the death of his father. He was on that account recalled to his village Shemlân. Ferez, throughout all the difficulties of the journey, in which he shared as well as myself, has been very serviceable to me. And, finally, I have taken farewell of my horse that has carried me so faithfully and safely over

* How much has happened since the writing of these lines! It is now no longer a future prospect; we have the actual fact before us. "Wars and rumours of wars—nation risen against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." But "all these are the beginning of sorrows." "Whoso readeth," saith the Lord, "let him understand."—Matt. xxiv. 7, 8, 15, &c.

so many steep rocks, and by the brink of so many deep abysses. I was sorry to part with the animal, but owing to the departure of Ferez I was left without a servant, and had no prospect of being able speedily to supply myself with another. Of course my horse could not be kept without being properly attended to, and I therefore thought the best thing I could do was to sell it, and to prosecute my travels in future on hired horses. This is unquestionably more expensive, but it will be one care less, as I shall not have to trouble myself now about the feeding of my own horse, a matter far from being easily accomplished at all places; and the further I proceed on my journeyings the more do I wish to escape from every source of care of which I can rid myself.

All these circumstances keep me at present detained in Jerusalem. It is well that thereby I neglect nothing; on the contrary, it was my very purpose to spend some days in "the city of the great king." If one would make himself anywise acquainted with Jerusalem, so as clearly to comprehend the principal occurrences related in the Scriptures connected with it, I should think he would find a residence for a month necessary. No doubt, one may see in much less time whatever there is to be seen in the city and its immediate environs; but then it is only a passing over it with haste, wanting that calm meditation, without which Jerusalem is to us, properly speaking, no Jerusalem. Besides, Christianity in Jerusalem, in its practical features, is too important not to seek to make ourselves better acquainted with it, and enter into fuller communion with it than a shorter period would allow.

And now, my friend, for to-day you must be content with these few lines. Thanks to Dr Macgowan's lancet, I am so far recovered that I was able this morning to take a walk. You will remember that the Damascus gate is but a few steps from my lodgings; thither, therefore, I directed my steps. I have already written you a few words about the direction of the Tyropeon valley, which Robinson and Ritter are of opinion extended from the Dung gate to the Jaffa gate. I am disposed to think, however, that this valley, which makes the separation between Zion and Moriah, begins at—or, to speak more correctly, outside of—the Damascus gate, and not at the Jaffa gate. I took this walk in order to convince myself of it, and have besides taken a drawing of that part of the city, in order to give you a clear idea of the depression of the ground at the Damascus gate, and of the course of the Tyropeon valley. I must now get ready for spending the evening at Miss Hovenden's, a pious English lady, who takes an active part in the work of evangelisation, without, however, being directly a member of the London Mission for promoting Christianity among the Jews. It is the evening for the weekly Bible meeting, which otherwise takes place at the house of Bishop Gobat; but as that highly esteemed and much loved man left this on the 12th current, with his wife and children, for Europe, Miss H. requested that the meeting for this evening should be held at her house.

19th April.

Early this morning I was cheered with your letter of the 3d of this month; and as some hours still

remain before the departure of the post, I hasten to finish this letter. You suppose me to be at Jerusalem, and you guessed not much beside the mark. I am at Jerusalem, and will cheerfully comply with your desire to have a distinct sketch of the Mount of Olives. You say, "I have seen many prints of it, but methinks you might introduce something into it which I find wanting in them all. The clouds do not please me in such drawings. I would have you so draw the clouds as if they were already marshalling themselves together to form themselves into the shape of a throne; for it is there on the Mount of Olives that, according to Zechariah xiv. 4, He shall descend. Your eyes, it is true, will not behold that throne just now. Before that time arrive, you will, if God please, be back among us. But contemplate this Mount of Olives as an heir might be supposed to contemplate beforehand his inheritance which has been bequeathed to him by testament,—Canaan—the chrysalis from which, at the magic stroke of God's almighty power, the beautiful butterfly will instantly emerge, glittering with gold and purple in the rays of the everlasting sun of salvation!" O my dear friend, how must I disappoint you! The time of the Bridegroom's feast is not yet come. We have first to raise the psalms of humiliation before we unite in the great choir to sing the praises of the King, as set forth in Psalm xlv. With Christ's people it is as with Christ himself; first down in the depth of the Cedron valley, then upward to the Mount of Olives. And between the bed of the valley and the top of the mount there are some hundred feet of a steep and toilsome ascent to be traversed. But why should we

fear, although the valley be deep, and the mount be steep and high? We know, if we but press onwards in the right path, we shall reach the top at last, and the most glorious prospect will abundantly reward our pains. But, to return to the realities,—you must not look for any sketches of clouds on the Mount of Olives from me. I will try to give you a view of the hill as it is at present, of a pale light gray colour, with a few scanty olive-trees, terraces, footpaths, and a small cluster of houses on the middle and most elevated summit, crowned with a minaret, and thereby indicating that this place—Helena's Church of the Ascension —is now under the power of the Turks. In one of my walks outside of the city, on its north-west side, near the place where Golgotha must probably have stood, I saw the Mount of Olives to the greatest advantage. Jerusalem lay in the foreground, the blasphemous mosque of Omar rising in the middle ground; behind these the Mount of Olives, and far in the distance the peculiarly tinted mountains of Moab. The sky I will draw in my sketch such as it generally is at present, altogether blue, and particularly clear; then, at any rate, no clouds of my fancy will stand in the way of yours. Another drawing which I am owing you, in order to bring Jerusalem plainly before your mind, is the view of the city from the Mount of Olives. I have already begun it; but the extent of the subject, and the minute accuracy with which it requires to be treated, demand two more sittings. I have chosen a point about half-way up the mount, and somewhat more to the north than that from which the view of Jerusalem is generally taken. I found that from this point I could best

distinguish the different buildings by their shades. While seated there I was perhaps two hundred yards, or thereabouts, distant from the spot where the Saviour sat when alone with the disciples,* and announcing to them the things that were to come upon Jerusalem, and the signs of His coming, and of the end of the world. Although I might not have sat upon the identical spot, it was quite evident to me why our Lord, after He had left the temple, and been shewn by the disciples its huge stones and splendid buildings, went to the Mount of Olives, in order to give them a deeper impression of the lot that awaited the proud city. With the magnificent panorama before them, Jerusalem with its surrounding hills and valleys, they must have well understood that saying: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."† And the disciples had need to be enlightened and fortified in the discernment of the signs of the times; therefore it was that He added, by way of explanation, a reference to the fig-tree, when its branches become tender, and when it puts forth its leaves; for the oppression in those days would be great: "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to those that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until

* Matt. xxiv. 3; Mark xiii. 3. † Luke xxi. 20.

the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." * In such straits many men's hearts would fail them for fear; Satan would do his utmost, so as, if possible, to seduce the very elect; and in order that His disciples—and all who should, through their word, become their followers—might be able to stand fast at so dreadful a time, the Lord made them comprehend the future lot of Jerusalem with the utmost clearness of graphic delineation. We may imagine to ourselves how the Redeemer pointed, as it were, with His finger to the approach of the Roman legions from yonder hills; and how the disciples must afterwards have recollected these words: "Behold, I have told you before!" "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door." †

I have become quite fond of the Mount of Olives—one is so undisturbed there. Here and there the shade of a fig-tree or an olive-tree offers you a nice and quiet retreat, where you may sit down in silent meditation. The city, which, in a straight line, is only at about 400 yards distance, is of course quite different from the Jerusalem of the days of our Lord; but its position and leading features, the environing hills, the colouring, the bright blue sky, all this has remained the same, and one can thus tolerably well suppose himself transferred to the days of old. Jesus was probably often seated under such an olive-tree, either alone or with His disciples. With what a look of divine compassion must He have constantly contemplated hardened and blinded Jerusalem! How many prayers must He have sent up from this spot to His Father, when

* Luke xxi. 22–24. † Matt. xxiv. 25–33.

"at night He went out and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives!"* And oh! who shall ever be able to sound the depth of that love which made Him weep bitter tears over Jerusalem, when He came up for the last time to the feast, and when, as He rounded the foot of the Mount of Olives, on the road from Bethany, He saw the city before him in all her royal splendour, yet at the same time blinded and averse to the things that belonged unto her peace, and therefore given over to such miseries and such destruction as the earth had never witnessed!† Oh that Jesus on the Mount of Olives were never out of our thoughts, even He who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!"‡

You suppose, perhaps, that while walking along and over the Mount of Olives, I have made the garden of Gethsemane the object of my frequent and special visits. But no; this has not been the case. The small parcel of ground, 160 English feet in length, and 150 feet in breadth, at present enclosed by a high quadrangular, white-plastered wall, and the spot which, since the days of the Empress Helena, has been pointed out by tradition as the garden of Gethsemane, and which may indeed have been the scene of the bitter agony and soul-anguish of our blessed Lord, has lost all its original characteristics. According to Jerome, in his time a church had been built over the place, and if that church extended over the whole garden, the olive-trees of course must have been removed to make room for it. Nevertheless, people will tell us that the trees which we now find here are

* Luke xxi. 37; John viii. i. † Luke xix. 41–44. ‡ Heb. xiii. 8.

the very same that were there at the time of our Lord. It is possible, however, that the ancient oratory was small, and covered only the hollow rock, where, according to the usual custom of identifying everything with caves, the monks maintain that the Lord offered up his thrice repeated prayer.* Be this as it may, and be the tradition true or not, there has been as fierce a strife about Gethsemane as about any other of the so-called Holy Places; the Latins have carried the day, and the Greeks, by way of compensation, have made it out that the piece of ground which their rivals have secured is not the true Gethsemane, while they point to another spot, lying a few yards more to the north, as being the identical garden, taking good care at the same time to surround it with a wall as their own property. In a drawing which I have taken of the valley of the Cedron, as seen from the heights to the north-east of the city, you will see the relative position of the two localities. Deplorable as is such a hostility between those who are called after the name of Christ — a hostility about the very place where Christ endured the bitterest agony in order that He might make peace between God and man, and between man and man—not less deplorable is the manner in which the Romanists debase and spoil every spot that is any way associated with the life or sufferings of the Redeemer. The wall that now surrounds the eight old olive-trees, is quite of modern date. It would appear that the monks had found it necessary to build it, first, in order to assure themselves of the possession of the ground, and again, in order to prevent twigs and

* Matt. xxvi. 39–44.

leaves being broken off the trees without the payment of a baksheesh, seeing that no traveller ever visits Gethsemane without wishing to bring away with him some such memorial of his pilgrimage. The wall once completed, the monks have ornamented the garden, according to the usual practice of the Romish Church. Little paths and flower-beds, ornamental railings, and other contrivances, have changed Gethsemane into a place which cannot but suggest to the visitor the idea of a tea-garden. If you have any desire to enter, you will find a little door in a corner of the eastern wall, at which you only need to knock, when it will be opened by a monk, who, for a few piastres, will be glad to gratify you. As respects myself, I have too great a loathing for these Romish embellishments, and prefer remaining outside, while from the general character of the valley of the Cedron at this place, I can well enough imagine how the Saviour liked to seclude himself there in a garden, where the thick foliage of the olives and other fruit-trees must have hid him from the observation of men. To this day the olive-trees in the valley are remarkable for the weight and luxuriance of their branches and foliage. *Somewhere* thereabouts must Gethsemane have been, beneath *such* a shade, *at the foot of the Mount of Olives,* and *close* to the brook Cedron.

Whether, then, it may have been *a few* hundred feet (for the locality is too circumscribed to permit of its being *many*) more in this or that direction, makes no difference to me. Thankful for the enjoyment of the general indication of the place referred to in Scripture by the sight of the olive gardens in the valley, I willingly allow the identical ground of Gethse-

mane to remain under a veil of sacred uncertainty, while I avoid coming in contact with the scandal of the embellishments in the walled garden of the Latins.

"But what, then, of the olive leaves which you promised to bring me?" do you ask?

Fear not, my dear friend, I have not forgotten you. I have plucked them from one of the very ancient trees that stand only a few paces from the wall of the Latin Gethsemane. It is quite as likely that that tree belonged to the true Gethsemane as the eight others that are enclosed within the wall. For myself, I feel perfectly contented with these olive-leaves as a memorial. You, I hope, will feel the same.

And now I must stop, for the hour for the despatch of letters has arrived. I will only add, that yesterday I enjoyed a real feast-day (the Lord's-day). The church was full of the many English travellers who happen at this moment to be in Jerusalem. What a privilege it was to hear the faithful Mr Crawford deliver a most earnest and awakening discourse on Luke xvii. 26! The missionary Reichardt preached in the afternoon in German, and in the evening we had a meeting, as usual, for the reading of Scripture at Mr Crawford's house.

One word more let me add about an occurrence that has interested me. The night before last, on coming home from a walk, I saw Mr Crawford in conversation with a Jewish Rabbi who wanted to learn English from him, while he in return offered to teach Mr Crawford Hebrew. I went up to them, and learned to my surprise that the Rabbi was an Amsterdam Jew, of the name of Cohen, and who, as

he said, had been residing in Jerusalem under the name of Rabbi Nathan since 1818. He had not yet quite forgotten Dutch. There was something touching to me in meeting in Jerusalem with a son of Abraham (after the flesh), who had been born in my own country, and who spoke the same language which I had been first taught to lisp while lying in a mother's bosom. Alas! that in other respects our sentiments should be so different! The great point, as you can easily imagine, came at once under discussion; but I now observed, what I have since found confirmed by others, that Rabbi Nathan is one of the most learned in the Talmud, and at the same time one of the most hardened Jews in all Jerusalem. Our conversation lasted long, and, owing to the Rabbi's eloquence, was copious enough in words. It was the first I had ever held on the subject of Christ with a Jew learned in the Talmud; but it gave me a sufficient insight into the kind of opposition with which this sort of Israelites fortify themselves against every impression from Christians. "All good and well," said he, "for you folks; I willingly believe you to be the best of honest men, and that you long for the conversion of the Jews with perfect sincerity; but, withal, you are poor, mistaken people, that are quite unacquainted with the divine sciences. And were it not for the deep study I have devoted to the Talmud and to our other Rabbinical writings, I should not be able to withstand your objections." Thus it is the Talmudic science which so puffs up these Jews, and which, by swelling them with self-conceit, prevents them from receiving the gospel. Therefore it is that they always endeavour, every time

they are spoken to about their not believing in Christ, to transfer the controversy to the territory of the Talmud, well knowing that there they have a battery of never-ending sophistry which touches upon a thousand side questions, and thereby withdraws the attention from the one grand point with which we have properly to do. Some missionaries among the Jews have thought to overcome this difficulty by studying the Talmud itself, and I know not what other Jewish writings besides; but experience has proved to them that this does not advance them by a finger's breadth towards their object. On the contrary, it has proved a mere waste of strength and a diversion from the grand matter, sin, and mercy through the blood of the Cross. In short, if you would form a correct idea of the chief controversy waged by the learned Jews against the preaching of Christ, read what their fathers, the Scribes and Pharisees, said insultingly to the man that had been born blind, after he had been cured by Jesus. "Then they reviled him and said, *Thou* art *his* disciple; but WE (!) *are Moses' disciples* (!). We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow (mark the contempt), *we know not from whence he is.*"* How true was the reply which the Lord made to them in a similar contest!—"There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust: for had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: *for he wrote of me.*" † The words addressed by Jesus Himself to those Jews may serve as a rule for directing us how to answer those who oppose the gospel.

* John ix. 28, 29. † John v. 45, 46.

I have often heard the reflection made, that the conversion of the heart is a matter that lies with God. The Holy Ghost alone can renew the heart; his assistance we must therefore wait for. Yes; but here there is an untruth concealed behind a truth. Certainly, the renewal of the heart is exclusively the work of the Holy Ghost; but man may resist and hinder that work. Waiting on the Holy Ghost is necessary above all things; but it must not be an empty, lazy, and passive waiting; this is nothing better than opposing the Spirit's work. However powerfully the Holy Ghost operates sometimes and in some persons, He forces none; but there are many who force Him to abandon His work on the hard and ever more and more self-hardening heart. It is true, the Lord promises a new heart and a new spirit as the gift of His grace;* but He gives at the same time this command, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" †

Philip has just been here to warn me that it is high time my letter were off. I could have wished to have said more on this subject, but I must now break off. Farewell, my dear friend; believe me always, &c.

JERUSALEM, 26*th April.*

Again have I spent a week in the Holy City. A few days more, and I shall no more see Jerusalem. No more absolutely? I hope not; but probably no more in the course of this journey.

Since sending off my last to you, I have again heard, seen, and experienced much, which you will be inter-

* Jer. xxxi. 33; Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 25–27. † Ezekiel xviii. 31.

ested in hearing. In all this, however, it is impossible to maintain any strict methodical order. It strikes me I must begin again where I last ended—with the work of evangelisation among the Jews. Were it not that there are so many clear and copious reports on the state of the Jews in the Holy Land, and more particularly in Jerusalem, and on the efforts that have already been, and still continue to be, made for their conversion,* I would willingly send you a sketch of one or other of these efforts. But even in this respect I will be as chary as possible with quotations from printed documents, in order that time and place may be left for my communicating what appears to me to be least known. If you would have a clear idea of the condition of the Jews in Palestine in general, and of those in Jerusalem in particular, I know no more faithful or complete account than that of the Scottish missionaries in 1839. In the course of the years that have elapsed since their mission some changes have no doubt occurred; for example, the number of Jews given by them (*Narrative*, pp. 163 and 164), for Jerusalem, 7000, and for all the Holy Land, 12,000, is now considerably augmented. I have heard it asserted on various sides that there are now in Jerusalem alone above 10,000 Jews; elsewhere, too, there has been a considerable increase, though not in the same proportion. The missionary operations among the Jews have also, since 1839, undergone a great and constantly increas-

* See, among others, the *Jewish Intelligence and Monthly Account of the Proceedings of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews.—Narrative of a Mission to the Jews.—Journal of Missionary Labours in the City of Jerusalem*, by F. C. Ewald, &c.

ing extension. But the peculiar character of Judaism has remained the same; the Jerusalem Jew in his bearing towards Christianity is not altered, and even the practical results of the efforts of the missionaries among them are at present little more apparent than they were some years ago, at the commencement of their difficult labours.

Of all the missionary societies there is perhaps none that meets with so much interest among believers as the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. I sometimes meet, in the publications of that Society, with addresses which are meant to exalt the object of its labours above other missionary efforts. Surely such addresses are unnecessary, and perhaps not very favourable to the interests of the cause they advocate. The interest taken in the bringing in of the Jews to Christ's kingdom is one of the great characteristics of the Christianity of our days. Those who plead for the missionary work among the Jews must not forget, however, that the time of their being ingrafted again into the old stock is most intimately associated with the "fulness of the Gentiles." The sooner the gospel is preached to *all* nations, the sooner then shall Israel's day dawn. We must do the one, and not leave the other undone.

Meanwhile, among the ordinary mistakes in stimulating to interest in the missionary work, is to be classed the presenting of strongly coloured pictures, striking incidents connected with conversions, long lists of proselytes, and so forth. I will not impute to the London Society as an evil peculiar to it what is of general occurrence. But it appears to me that people would

often labour more cheerfully, and therefore with more of a blessing, both on themselves and on others, would they trouble themselves less about the abundant *fruits*, and more about the abundant *labour*. Not as if I would maintain that rich results could be a matter of indifference to us: how should men have courage and energy to plough and to sow, had they no hope of a good harvest? But by having their eyes turned *too much* to the harvest, they run the risk of not carrying on their work in the way the Lord has prescribed. The missionary work is one of much patience, much self-denial, much forbearance; and herein is that saying true—"One soweth and another reapeth."* But "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."† Why, then, should we be afraid to look in the face the difficulties attending the mission among the Jews, and the small amount of fruit that has as yet been reaped? Shall we thus lessen the interest that is felt in the mission? Will the contributions to the mission fall off in consequence? We believe not. For if it was the great spiritual destitution of Israel that previously called the mission into existence, the same cogent reason will now redouble the zeal and increase the interest felt by all who lay to heart the lot of Israel. With the Lord it is a seeking of the lost sheep,—not of the ninety and nine, which are safe in the pastures of the wilderness; and the Lord's followers find themselves constrained in the same manner to help most where the necessity is greatest. It is possible that some give unwillingly their contributions to missionary labours of which they hear much about the difficulties and little

* John iv. 37. † Gal. vi. 9.

of the good results; let each in that respect take counsel with his own heart. For ourselves, we are of opinion that the faithful and true statement of the difficulties and discouragements which the missionaries meet with, is a more cogent reason for Christians giving their support than the summing-up of the many proselytes gained by their labours, of whom so many, alas! afterwards draw back.

I acknowledge that the few days I have spent in Jerusalem are insufficient to give me a just view of all the particular details of the mission here. Nevertheless, it requires no long intercourse with the members of the mission to obtain a knowledge of its main features. And if I may be allowed candidly to state my impression, I must say that I do not find the condition of the proselytes answer to the favourable conception which I had been led to form from the missionary reports. It is possible the fault may lie with myself. Possibly I may take too dark a view of the case; possibly, too, I may have formed to myself an ideal picture which was not warranted by the reports of the mission. Be this as it may, words on the state of the mission, such as those of Bishop Gobat, may well be listened to with double attention: — "Although we preach, exhort, warn, and pray with the people, proselytes and others, it is frequently, nay, almost habitually, without any visible effect or result. And as I dare not say that the set time to favour Zion is not yet come, much less that the arm of the Lord is shortened, that His Word has lost its power, or that He is unwilling to save, I must come to the conclusion, which, as far as I am concerned, I feel to be the truth, that

the fault is with us, in our want of power from on high, of unction, of life. When, therefore, I ask you to pray for us, truth obliges me to add: do it as for poor and wretched creatures, unprofitable servants, who, although they possess a spark of spiritual life, live in such a deadening atmosphere, that they need a daily and double supply of grace, in order to become what they are called and expected to be, viz., the light of the world and the salt of the earth." *

O that many such humble and faithful servants might come to Zion, and that the Spirit may be given to us to strengthen their hands by our prayers!

With such a state of matters before us, the question naturally suggests itself, whether the missionary work among the Jews is conducted in the manner best fitted to promote its success? In all missionary work much depends on the manner in which the gospel is presented. The question therefore is an important one. The Scottish missionaries of 1839 gave it their most earnest attention.† A knowledge of the Arabic, Hebrew, Spanish, German, and Italian tongues (thus do they express themselves in their enumeration of the accomplishments required in a missionary to Jerusalem), is in the first place necessary. Further, he ought to be well grounded in prophecy, "and he should be one who fully and thoroughly adopts the principles of literal interpretation, both in order to give him hope and perseverance, and in order to fit him for reasoning with Jews. It is not so much preaching talents as controversial that are required;

* See *Jewish Intelligence*, June 1851, p. 218, &c.

† See *Narrative*, p. 193, &c.

yet it is to be hoped that both may soon be needed. He ought to have an acquaintance with Hebrew literature to the extent of understanding the Talmud, so as to be able to set aside its opinions. Acquaintance, too, with the Cabbala is necessary, in order to know the sources of Jewish ideas, and how Scriptural arguments are likely to affect their minds," &c. This they suggested in answer to the above question. Naturally, the experience of the missionaries established at that time in Jerusalem was in this matter their rule; the information they received on various points was from the best source. Yet experience has proved that the preaching of the gospel according to this plan is attended with little progress. It is at this day as it was in those of Paul: "Charge them before the Lord that they strive *not* about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. — Shun profane and vain babblings. — Foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes." * The London Society has perceived this, and on that account has recently sent a missionary to Jerusalem, not gifted with any extraordinary controversial accomplishments to dispute with the Jews, but a man full of the Holy Ghost, "desiring to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified." You know to whom I refer, —the Rev. H. Crawford; and now see how he sets about bringing the gospel tidings to the Jews. Last Thursday evening he held his first meeting for the searching of Holy Scripture. He had succeeded in assembling some Jews in the little school-room at his house, in spite of the curses and excommunications

* 2 Tim. ii. 14, 16, 23.

with which the Rabbis threaten all who have any dealings with the missionaries. Mr Crawford is not yet familiar enough with one of the languages commonly spoken by the Jews to make himself understood without an interpreter; but Mr Daniels (the missionary who was formerly at Safed, and who found himself obliged to leave that place, and has since resided at Jerusalem), translated what he said into Hebrew. He proved from the Scriptures that the law of Moses can justify no man, but much rather makes the transgression to be exceeding sinful, and thereby only brings a curse; that the law was nowise given by God in order to justify man, "but was ordained on account of transgressions;" that God, however, entered into a covenant of grace with Adam, which covenant he continued with Noah, Abraham, and so on; that this covenant of grace is an "everlasting covenant," that never can be annulled; that God, in fulfilment of this covenant, made an engagement of a propitiatory priesthood with Phineas,* giving to him, not to Moses, His "covenant of peace." "He shall have, and his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was jealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel;" that nevertheless, they, the Jews, have now for near eighteen hundred years been without the priestly service, so that one of two things must have happened: either God has departed from and been unfaithful to this everlasting covenant, or God has been proved to be true by the appointment of another High Priest, even Jesus Christ, "the Son of David,"—"born at Bethlehem,"—"Jesus of Naza-

* Num. xxv. 11–13.

reth," now exalted at God's right hand, "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man,"* "a high priest over the house of God,"† presenting at all times before God the offering of His atonement.

I had the privilege of being present at this first exposition of the Gospel. That I had much personal enjoyment from it you will readily understand.

Here was no Talmudical or Cabbalistic strife of words. Sin and grace, man incapable of recovery by himself, and Christ the Saviour of the lost sinner—to turn all his energies to convincing man of this, and to eschew all strife of words about matters that divert the sinner from these great truths, this is the method which the missionary never will pursue in vain. Scripture itself points to this way, and experience in all parts of the earth, whether amongst the Heathen or the Jews, bears the same testimony. One of the missionaries, whose labours at Jerusalem were particularly blessed, the Rev. F. C. Ewald, gives us in his *Journal*, p. 220, which we have mentioned more than once, a specimen of the manner in which he went to work, and in his case, too, we find the same testimony repeated. A Jew came to him with the request that he would read the New Testament with him. Why?

"'To learn something about Christianity.'

"'If you wish to know the truth, if you really desire to know something about Christianity for the salvation of your soul, you must begin with reading the Old Testament, for Christianity, the doctrine of the Messiah, is clearly revealed there.'

* Heb. viii. 2. † Heb. x. 21.

"I read with him for two hours in the Old Testament (I could not then spare more time), pointed out to him the fall of the human race in Adam, the glorious promise of a Deliverer, and the benefits resulting from His meritorious death and passion to all who believe in Him. These were new things to the inquirer. He came to me for three successive days, during which time I fully developed to him Christ, as predicted by the fathers, by Moses, and the prophets. Having done this, I said, 'Now we will read the New Testament, for you will be able to understand it now that you have read the Old Testament. You will find that the Old Testament is closely connected with the New; that the former contains the predictions, the latter the fulfilment.' And I am thankful to state, that this son of Abraham has thereby been convinced of the truth, has been brought to a sense of his own sinfulness, the need of a Saviour, and become a disciple of Christ Jesus."

So much, then, for the most effectual manner of preaching the Gospel to the Jews,—a direct exhibition of sin and the atonement,—the avoiding of learned verbal controversies on the Talmud and the religious writings of the Rabbis.

A great hindrance, however, arises from the difficulty of finding access to the Jews. The bitter hatred entertained by the Rabbis towards a living Christianity, and, in particular, towards the missionaries, makes it almost impossible for the latter to speak to the Jews about the concerns of their souls,—much more to bring them under regular religious teaching; and, finally, should they profess their belief in the Lord

Jesus, to incorporate them into the congregation of the Protestant Christians of Jerusalem. This you will readily conceive from what we see on looking around us in our own Christian lands. On this account, the London society has very wisely attached to its agency at Jerusalem a medical institution in the form of an hospital, in which gratuitous attendance is given to sick Jews. The haughty heart, when broken by the disease of the body, is willing to listen to the voice of Divine compassion, especially when the lips of those from whom that voice proceeds are in correspondence with the benevolent hand of human sympathy and tenderness. This is the way pointed out to us by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself,—the way which, methinks, is too much neglected by missionaries and missionary societies in general. Once and again have I written to you about the desirableness of having the Gospel preached with the aid of medicinal advice to the heathens of this land (I mean the Mohammedans); and with respect to the Jews, the case is not different: nay, more; as the temporal condition of the Jews in Palestine is much more pitiable than that of the Mohammedans, we may be allowed to hope that the medical aid referred to will operate so much the more powerfully among them. How poor, ill-clothed, and miserable the Jews are in Jerusalem, is very well known; and also how hundreds would perish with hunger but for the paltry supplies sent them every year from their fellow-religionists in Europe. In the reports of the worthy Dr Macgowan, under whose management the hospital has now been for many years, constant instances occur of the deeply deplor-

able condition in which the Jews subsist. As the subject is so important, you must allow me to adduce one or two cases. "The poor," writes Dr Macgowan in a letter dated 28th Nov. 1850,* "suffer much from cold during the winter season, or rather the rainy season, in this country, from their being miserably clothed, fed, and lodged, which circumstances constitute the predisposing causes in general of all diseases. In my private visits to the Jews in their own dwellings, I have many opportunities of becoming acquainted with their condition, which in many instances is truly wretched. Among the numerous ones within my knowledge, I would refer to one or two only, in both which I believe that actual want of the necessaries of life, and the depression of mind which usually accompanies it, have been the predisposing cause of disease. Yesterday I was called to a dirty looking house, after entering which I was ushered into a large gloomy chamber, wherein were three beds, each occupied by a sick person. These consisted of an aged woman, and a man and his wife; the latter being near her confinement. Everything in the room bore the appearance of squalid poverty. But I was most struck by the state of the patients, who seemed to me, after an attentive examination of their symptoms, to be all suffering under one and the same disease, viz., hunger. I visited them again this morning, with the purpose of giving them the means of providing some necessary articles of food, which they stood so much in need of. My impression as to their real condition was confirmed by this second visit. On

* See *Jewish Intelligence*, March 1851.

my asking the old woman what ailed her, she answered: '*Mi meuro de hambre,*' (I am dying of hunger). And when I further inquired of the young man what were his means of subsistence, he confessed that he was quite destitute, and dependent on the precarious assistance of his relatives."

In another letter, dated January 28, 1851 (*Jew. Intell.*, May 1851), Dr Macgowan writes about a young Jewess, a patient in the hospital, who had given birth to an infant the day following the death of her husband:—"Thirty days had elapsed since that event, during which she had suffered the greatest distress from illness and want of the common necessaries of life. It seems that the family had no relatives in Jerusalem, whose assistance they could claim in their distress. But one of the small community of the Karaites, who had known her husband, played the part of the good Samaritan to the poor Jewess and her child. He came to the hospital, and making known to me her distressed case, begged that I would receive her as a patient. I readily gave my consent, and she was soon conveyed with her infant into one of the wards of the hospital. On examination, I found that she was suffering from lumbar abscess, and reduced to the last degree of emaciation. The child seemed perishing from want of food, as the mother was unable to nurse. To bring up infants by hand is extremely difficult in this country; and I therefore made inquiries among the Jews for a wet-nurse. One was soon found, and the child committed to her care. It was snatched just in time from the grave. This contributed not a little to the comfort of the mother, who had already

been operated on, and was doing well." Would you believe, my friend, that notwithstanding all this labour of love, the enmity of the Jews is so great that they do their utmost to keep their poor perishing sufferers back from the hospital? Alas for such marvellous blindness! There is a dawn of hope, but the Spirit of darkness fights against it as much as he can. Indeed, one often feels tempted to question whether light will ever break through and conquer. But the Lord watcheth it all; and often, when opposition was the greatest, and when every opening for good seemed to be shut, His arm has wrought mightily, and His name has greatly been glorified. So, for instance, Dr Macgowan received, not long ago, a visit from the Chief Rabbi, and several of the other Rabbis, to thank him for all the good he does to Israel. Some of these Rabbis were once amongst his bitterest enemies. Gladdening, too, are the official reports of the number of those who have received help, either from Dr Macgowan himself or from his assistant, Mr E. S. Calman. Not less than 457 patients have been treated in the hospital during the past year (1851); 5113 have been out-patients, relieved at the establishment; and 2713 patients have been visited at their own dwellings.*

* Not only through means of the hospital, but also by private medical aid, a way of access is sought to the heart of the Jews. "In order to obtain this difficult object," wrote Mr Crawford to me in the end of 1852, "I propose having recourse to the aid of my original profession. I have taken a shop in the very heart of the Jewish quarter, and there I intend to spend some hours daily, keeping medicines there, together with Bibles and tracts. The opposition to this measure will, of course, be great. Indeed, I hear already that the Rabbis have forbidden any Jew to approach this shop; but even if they do not, it will bring me frequently in contact with them, and, indeed, the shop is so

In speaking about the labours of self-denying love, which seeks to save souls from destruction by means

placed that I could speak to several Jews without going out of my own door, as they are engaged in their own business. I intend to follow Dr Kalley's example, in having prescription papers, one side printed in Hebrew with texts and brief arguments from Scripture, the other blank, for writing the prescription. Many regard this as a wild scheme, and it is very likely to fail; but in a work so arduous as this a man must go as far as he has light to direct him, and trust for further illumination according to his need." A few months later, Mr Crawford wrote as follows:—"In the month of January last I opened a little shop in the heart of the Jewish quarter, to give medicines gratuitously to the sick, there being many more sick than the hospital can relieve. I hoped by this means to become personally acquainted with many Jews, and to progress in knowledge of their barbarous dialects. This has in great measure answered my expectations. At first I had numerous applicants, more than I could well get time to attend to; amongst these were some of the chief Rabbis; but after the *preaching*, excommunication was proclaimed (through the streets) against all who should have any dealings with me, and since this I have had comparatively few; it has, however, been a means of communication with many who otherwise would have remained strangers. One day, to my delight, I found the shop door plastered with abusive placards, which was taking the initiative in a warfare which I am most anxious to carry on. I wrote an answer to these placards, carefully avoiding to reciprocate their abuse, and many of the Jews read this answer, a copy of which I keep posted up in the shop, and I find the advantage of a thing written on the spot under circumstances generally known; for although they will not read tracts, they will read that which relates to local transactions in which they are interested." A more detailed account of the preaching in the streets is found in the *Jewish Intelligence*, July 1853, p. 252, &c. It is curious to observe how several of the newspapers of southern Europe have narrated in their columns this attempt to preach the gospel, not, however, without making their own comments upon what Mr Crawford on that occasion had to suffer. From the July number of the above quoted periodical we here add a copy of the Jewish placards, and the answer Mr Crawford gave:—

"*Jewish Placards.*

"A bad sign, this wicked and unclean heresy; his name and memory shall be blotted out. Thy stupid head has opened a shop in our street, and knows not what to do to pervert the holy Israelites, either with

of affording help to sick people, I must not forget to mention the Jerusalem Institution of Deaconesses of Pastor Fliedner, from Kaiserswerth. "When sickness was so prevalent during several months of last year," thus writes Bishop Gobat in his yearly report of

money, which you divide to the poor every month, or with words of cunning deceit; and also thou hast thought to preach a sermon, but when thou preachedst in the Jewish quarter we have done unto thee according to our will. Woe to you, woe to your soul! You have lost this world and the world to come! And to conclude, what are you? only a filthy dog; and in thy sermon which thou preachedst thou sayest 'And all the house of Israel, and,'"—[When my dragoman had copied thus far, a Jew came and tore down both the placards.]

Mr Crawford's reply went as follows:—

"'Let them curse, but bless thou.'
"'To the law and to the testimony.'

"Men and Brethren,—Since you accuse me of giving money to the poor Jews, in order to pervert their souls, I hereby promise to give money, not to the poor and unlearned, but to the wise and great among you who are able to prove publicly from Moses and the prophets the following points:—

"*Challenge to the Learned at Jerusalem.*

"א One thousand piastres to any rabbi who can prove that the law now observed by the Jews is the same law which God gave unto Moses, without addition or alteration by precept of men.

"ב One thousand piastres to any rabbi who can prove that the law as now observed by the Jews can save the soul of any man in the world to come.

"ג One thousand piastres to any rabbi who can prove that all men, Jews as well as Gentiles, are not by nature under the curse and wrath of God, and in danger of eternal damnation.

"ד One thousand piastres to any rabbi who can prove that any man living can be justified before God, except through faith in the Messiah, the 'Branch' of David and the 'Lord our Righteousness.'

"ה One thousand piastres to whoever can prove that the Messiah is not the Son of God as well as Son of David.

"ו One thousand piastres to whoever can prove that the time at which the prophets predicted the coming of the Messiah is not long since past.

"ז One thousand piastres to whoever can prove that the Messiah

the Jerusalem Mission,* "so that there was scarcely any family without one or more of its members being dangerously ill, including the two teachers of the Diocesan School, and no proper person to attend and nurse the sick could be found, I wrote to the Rev. Mr Fliedner, asking him to send us two of the pious deaconesses of Kaiserswerth, to nurse our sick, to visit regularly our proselyte females, and, if possible, to take some part in teaching the children of the school, in cases when the teachers be unwell. In April last, Mr Fliedner himself brought four deaconesses, one of superior education, to direct the work, and one well acquainted with

should not come first in weakness, to suffer and die for the sins of Israel and the Gentiles, before He comes as a King in power and great glory to judge the world.

"ך One thousand piastres to whoever can prove that Jesus of Nazareth is not the true Messiah, the Son of David, and the Son of God.

"The above 8000 piastres will be paid to any Jew in Jerusalem, or in any part of the world, who can prove publicly the points above mentioned from Moses and the prophets."

In another letter of Mr Crawford's, published in the *Jewish Intelligence* for September 1853, we read—"I have made no fresh attempt at preaching in the Jewish quarter, hoping that permission from the committee would arrive for the use of the Hebrew types, which may enable me to commence a more unobtrusive warfare. To this I feel encouraged by the fact that the queries to the rabbis (of which I think I sent you a copy) excited a good deal of interest, and I could have circulated many if they had been printed; as it is, many Jews have read them, and some have promised an answer, but as yet I have received no claim for the money. At my little medicine shop, I had for a time but few applicants. A month since, a venerable authoritative looking rabbi came to the door, and asked me (others standing by) whether I was a physician or not. I replied that I was, and began to explain to him, as well as I could (Mermelstein not being there), my actual position and motives, but he soon turned to those about him saying, 'Another thing,' and left abruptly."

* *Forty-fourth Report of the London Society for Promoting*, &c., pp. 39, 40.

all the business of a Dispensary, both supported by two different committees in Prussia, and two others at my expense, to nurse first our proselytes, and also other patients. They all live together, and receive the patients that need more care and attention into their house. Besides this, they all visit regularly our poorer, and especially the female, proselytes and inquirers, to advise them, as well as to read and pray with them; from which some good effects are already visible. I expect much good from their presence here; for their quiet, humble, benevolent, and altogether Christian life and conduct, cannot but tell upon the hearts and consciences of many Jews and Gentiles. Dr Macgowan has kindly undertaken to attend gratuitously upon the patients of this Christian hospital. And here I cannot forbear expressing publicly my gratitude to the London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, for their generously defraying the travelling expenses of the two deaconesses, for whom I had written with the full concurrence of their representatives in Jerusalem."

The house in which the deaconesses are established lies on Mount Zion, close by the British Consulate. It belongs to the King of Prussia, who has purchased it with a view to further the object of Pastor Fliedner.

In a threefold manner, the pious women of the Kaiserswerth Institution are endeavouring in this house to do good, by nursing the sick, by educating children, and by offering hospitality to travellers. The two first-named branches are at the charge of the mother establishment at Kaiserswerth, receiving, at the same time, some support from private donations. In the Infir-

mary, now provided with twelve beds, patients are received of every nation and religion. The principle is here, by affording corporal assistance to the sick, and by shewing them acts of Christian charity, to try to open the way for the truths of the Gospel. The Rev. Mr Valentiner has at the beginning of this year, by the care of the King of Prussia, been added to the institution as its pastor. On the 2d May next, the deaconesses will have been established here a year, and the number of patients who during that year were received in the Infirmary, will appear under the following classification :—

German Protestants, . .	14	Arab Latins, . .	10
German Roman Catholics, .	2	Jews, ...	8
Italian Roman Catholics, .	3	Proselytes, . . .	12
Arab Protestants, . .	10	Coptic Christians, .	4
Arab Greeks, . . .	9	Mohammedans, . .	5
Russian Greeks, . . .	1		—
		In all,	78

Of these, 46 were men, and 32 women.

From Bishop Gobat's letter, you will have observed that the educational branch provides for the reception of orphans and other girls who are destitute and need instruction. The chief object is to train them for Christian teachers and nurses of the sick in these lands. There are now eight such children, under the care of the deaconesses,—some of Arab parents, others of Jews or proselytes.

The branch devoted to giving hospitality is a private institution of the King of Prussia. All kind of travellers, but especially Protestants, are received here. Poor pilgrims, who had hitherto only found a shelter in the convents, and on such occasions were often se-

duced to forsake the evangelical church to which they belonged, of course not without great damage to their souls, will find a free admittance in the house of the deaconesses. For a fortnight board and lodging is gratuitously given to them from the special fund provided by the noble monarch. The Prussian consul and the Bishop have the superintendence of this part of the institution.

I have visited the house of the deaconesses more than once. Both the arrangements and the persons of the institution please me much. I can fancy how in this place the hardened Jew and the savage Mohammedan must feel a new life penetrate their hearts, when Christian charity looks upon them with the eye of compassion, and stretches forth the kindly, nursing hand. I doubt not for a moment but that the humble deaconesses in Jerusalem will prove to be powerful instruments to the gathering in of souls for the kingdom of our blessed Lord.

Among the many difficulties which the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews has to overcome, the poor condition of the Jews is one of the greatest. Not only is the Society obliged to give pecuniary support to those Jews who embrace Christianity, and who, consequently, are cast off from all intercourse with their former co-religionists; but this kind of relief leads to great abuse on the side of the proselytes. Often it happens that Jews who are without bread, or burdened with debts, call upon the missionaries under pretext of being anxious for instruction in the things belonging to the religion of Christ; and when they have walked for a while in that

way, and by exemplary conduct, sometimes even to the extent of suffering persecution from their former fellow-Jews, have moved the missionaries to lend them help or relief in their secular distresses, they return "as the dog to his own vomit again," shewing thereby what their real object has been. Sometimes, too, they maintain consistency of character until they are baptised, and thereby actually become members of the Episcopal community. Their backsliding, after having been incorporated in the Church of Christ, is one of those sad circumstances which demand the greatest caution in the acceptance of the proselytes, but which cannot, even with the utmost knowledge and judgment of character, be entirely avoided. Nor is this state of things limited to the Jews merely. The Rev. Mr Sandreszki, missionary from the "Church Missionary Society" among the eastern Christians, a man of long and manifold experience, obtained by many years of labour in Asia Minor, declared to me the other day with regard to the eastern Christians, that of all those who come and hear the Gospel preached, he has no assurance that the inquiry of any one after Christ is sincere. He feared that of every one of them it would sooner or later appear that some worldly motive or other, probably of a pecuniary character, was their primary object.

In order to meet this difficulty, the London society in 1849 established a "House of Industry," where proselytes who are in want of means for earning their daily bread receive instruction in different trades, and at the same time instruction in the elements of the Christian religion. The time they spend in this

institution serves, too, as a kind of trial of their sincerity. The yearly reports have several times given very satisfactory accounts of the effects of this establishment. It is placed under the superintendence of Mr and Mrs Hershon, both converted Israelites. As far as I am justified in doing so from my short intercourse with them, I must say I have the best hope of their efforts with regard to the welfare of those who are placed under their care.

In the House of Industry little articles are made of olive-wood as memorials of Jerusalem for travellers. The olive-wood used for this purpose, I have been assured, is from the Mount of Olives. I have purchased a few of these little objects, and I promise you a share of them when I come home.

I fancy that another trial may be made for the advancement of the Gospel in Jerusalem by the colonisation of trades-people, true converts from Judaism. As the insincere and backsliding proselytes bring great shame on the name of the Lord Jesus; so, on the other hand, there is nothing that recommends the Gospel so much as Christian principles carried out and displayed in the daily conversation of disciples in the midst of the bustle of ordinary life. Moreover, as there are now a considerable number of Europeans living in Jerusalem, the want of European trades-people and servants is more and more felt. A carpenter, shoemaker, grocer, binder, and female dressmaker (for ladies) will find in Jerusalem good employment. From Germany a number of trades-people have already settled here; not, however, alas! from the desire of becoming salt among the multitude, but rather for the

sake of the bread which perisheth. Of the German colonists which Ritter mentions as having settled in Wadi-Urtas, where I did not meet with them, I have of late got some information. They are Christian colonists, walk in sincerity and consistency, and find abundance of work in their respective trades. It strikes me that the influence of such colonists upon the Jews would be greater if they were converts from Judaism.

One more point I must touch upon, as seeming to me open to improvement with regard to its bearing upon the Gospel labour in the Holy City,—I mean the manner in which the public divine service is conducted. I fear there will be many voices raised up against my opinion; but I may not for that reason withhold the expression of my conviction. The liturgical prayers are read, according to the custom of the English Episcopal cathedral churches in "Christ's Church" at Jerusalem, every morning, and this, on account of the proselytes, in the Hebrew language. Some of the missionaries to whom I freely expressed my opinion about the unfruitfulness of such a system of daily repeating a round of prayers, have answered me that the Jews, accustomed to a religion which consists almost exclusively of the observance of certain forms and the repetition of certain prescribed prayers, wanted a kind of substitute for these, and finding so much analogy in the prayer-services of the English Church with their own mode of worship, it would be an inducement to them to embrace the doctrines of Christ. *Something* formular was absolutely necessary for the Jew, grown up as he is in a whole life of forms. I readily admit that he wants *something* formular in

his mode of worshipping God through Christ—who wants it not?—but the daily early morning services in "Christ's Church" are not limited to a mere *something*. On the contrary, I entirely agree with what another member of the Jerusalem mission observed to me the other day: "I hope we shall begin an attempt to preach the Gospel daily in Hebrew in the church. I confess I do not like our present daily service; it partakes too much of the death-like apathy of most of such services in England. I think I could bear the want of success if I could really feel that we were scattering the seed of the Word both amongst our proselytes and the unconverted Jews; but we have no warrant to expect reaping, without sowing the precious seed." My own individual opinion is that the Jew, who is once convinced his religion of forms is insufficient to justify him before God, and sees, by the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he is set entirely free from the bondage of forms wherein he used to seek the forgiveness of his sins, must feel so perfectly weary of his forms that any kind of substitution in this respect is rather disagreeable than welcome to him. I rejoice, therefore, that the German evangelical element begins more and more to pervade Christianity in Jerusalem, as it will, no doubt, if working together with the English Episcopal Church in unity and love, compensate for the superabundance of formalism of which there would perhaps be danger if that church was exercising her influence exclusively; whilst, mutually acting on each other, the Episcopal forms are a means of keeping the free development of the Gospel truths in the non-episcopal sections of the

Church from running into democratical unorderliness. If any of the members of the London Society for Prom., &c., differ in this respect from me, I hope they will not be offended at the above candid expression of my sentiments, which indeed are those of the liveliest interest in their labours, and which are full of the deepest desire that they may reap an abundant harvest of their toil.

I know, my friend, you take a great interest in schools. You will therefore be glad to see, from the reports of the Society, how well the Diocesan school is progressing, and what a blessing is resting upon the school of Miss Cooper and her worthy assistant, Miss Railton, who has recently arrived in company of the Crawfords. About fifty Jewish women and girls receive instruction from these ladies, not only in the truths of Christianity, but also in such kinds of female work as are useful to them either in the family circle, or in the way of earning their bread.

So you perceive that the Jerusalem mission embraces a most interesting field of Gospel labour. The difficulties of those engaged in it are, no doubt, great and many; but great is also their faithful and persevering love. The Lord will watch His work: He will keep and water it continually; He will give the increase. Unto Him we commit it as His own work. May He fill us with warm and tender affection for His missionaries in Jerusalem, even for Zion's sake.* May we learn to understand much of the "songs of de-

* The Christian's call for taking an interest in Israel's salvation, is clearly and forcibly expounded in Fuller's *Land of Canaan*. See *Jewish Intelligence*, Oct. 1853, p. 341, &c. We recommend it to the attention of our readers.

grees," and may we answer the invitation, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."*

An institution of a different, but also an interesting character, is the "Jerusalem Literary Society," which was founded in the end of 1849 by "a few friends assembled in the Holy City, who, after some years' residence in the Holy Land, were convinced that there are manners, literature, antiquities, &c., existing around them which would highly interest the learned in Europe, especially those who attach themselves to studies relating to the Holy Bible—and were of opinion that, instead of merely detailing these in correspondence to their friends as anecdotes or descriptions, it would be better to concentrate such information in such a mode as would make it generally accessible." Literary and other contributions were requested from Europe, received, and collected in a library. A small museum of curiosities was founded in the same manner. Both are open to every traveller. The Society holds its meetings on Friday evenings, to which the members who reside in Jerusalem contribute essays, information, &c. "As soon as 300 subscriptions are enrolled," so says the prospectus, "the Society pledges itself to the publication in London of a quarterly magazine, in which the chief of these essays shall be inserted." I am sorry to say, however, that the Society has not yet attained this degree of success. Mr Finn, H. B. M.'s consul at Jerusalem, is President of the Society; Mr Rogers, Secretary for Palestine; the Right Rev. S. Gobat, Bishop of Jerusalem, and the Earl of Aberdeen, are Vice-patrons; and the Archbishop of Canterbury is Patron.

* Psalm cxxii. 6.

I have twice attended the Friday evening meetings of the Society with the greatest pleasure. The zeal shewn not only by Mr Finn and Mr Rogers, but also by the excellent Mrs Finn, deserves every praise. I hope their efforts will create increased interest in their institution, and will reap their due reward. Perhaps I may be allowed to observe that the Society stands as yet in too isolated a position, especially with reference to the learned German orientalists, who, as is well known, are greatly interested in whatever concerns Palestine. The want of a periodical, too, in which the labours and progress of the Society might be made known to the European world, is one cause why the Jerusalem Literary Society is not so useful as it might be; and with regard to its offering advantage to travellers who spend a few days in Jerusalem as by the way, their time is generally too limited and too much occupied with the seeing of so many important and attractive things, for them to spend it among the volumes of the Society's library, or in perusing its written documents.

One question which I should like to see the Society take up, is the one about the so-called Tombs of the Kings to the north of Jerusalem. You remember, my friend, I wrote to you from Paris, that M. de Saulcy had communicated to the "Institut de France," that he had ascertained these tombs to have really been those of the kings of Judah, but that his statement had encountered much opposition from the learned members of that body. One day I visited these tombs, and was able to do so with more advantage perhaps than M. de Saulcy, as the rainy season is past, and consequently I was not, as the French traveller was, obstructed by the

rain-water collected in these caves. The Rev. H. Reichardt was kind enough to accompany me. He had visited the tombs several times, and was therefore an excellent guide in the subterrannean chambers. I need not give you a description of the tombs, such having already been done by others at full length. If you ask me whether my visit has confirmed me or not in M. de Saulcy's supposition, I must answer that such a visit was not likely to lead to anything decisive on the point; for M. de Saulcy founds his so-called discovery of these being the real sepulchres of Judah's kings upon all sorts of hypotheses, which, of course, receive no elucidation by research on the spot. It is well known that Dr Robinson identifies these tombs with the sepulchral monument of Queen Helena of Adiabene; and that Dr Wilson holds them, perhaps on less valid grounds, to be the royal tombs of Herod. Ritter* has amply considered the matter, and has compared these suppositions with those of Schultz, Krafft, Töbler, and others. He deems the arguments of Robinson sufficiently conclusive as to the tombs being those of Helena. The name, "Tombs of the Kings," according to him, does not occur before the end of the 16th century among travellers in Palestine. On the other hand, he observes, the tomb of David, on the southern brow of Mount Zion, has been known under that name from the very earliest times;† whilst it appears from the 3d chapter of Nehemiah, verses 15 and 16, that the access from the King's gardens to the city of David and the "Sepulchres of David," quite corresponds with the situation of what at present is called David's Tomb. In turning

* *Erdkunde*, 16e theil. pp. 474, 478. † *Ib.* pp. 326, 357.

up the pages of Holy Writ, I find that, whatever might have been indicated by the name of "City of David," that name never refers to any locality beyond Mount Zion, properly speaking. Not only the small part of Zion on which the proper castle of David stood, but all that was situated within the wall which surrounded the royal residence along the steep declivities of the hill, seems to be meant by what Scripture calls "the City of David." But the so-called Tombs of the Kings to the north of Jerusalem are so far beyond the limits of Zion, that it is utterly impossible, however much Scripture might be strained to make it accord with one's own preconceived notions, to bring this distant locality under what the Bible so plainly and positively delineates as David's city. "So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David." * Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah, Amaziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah, were all buried in the family-sepulchre of their father David. Of Jehoram, Joash, Uzziah, or, as the book of Kings calls him, Azariah, Ahaz, Manasseh and Amon, it is recorded that they were buried in their family-sepulchres, but not in those of the kings, with the addition, however, in "the city of David." If, then, I keep to the letter of the Word of God, it seems to me impossible, whatever the tombs called those of the kings to the north of Jerusalem may be, to identify them with the sepulchre of David and his successors, or with those of Jehoram and the other kings who were not buried in the royal sepulchres, though also "in the City of David."†

* 1 Kings ii. 10.

† From the already quoted volumes of M. de Saulcy, it appears that

While speaking on the subject of the sepulchral grounds to the north of Jerusalem, I would further take you round to those of the Judges, lying about an

he does not accept the positive declaration of the Bible, "*in the city of David.*" We have no intention to insert in this Narrative a critical analysis of the arguments of M. de Saulcy. It may, however, be expedient to direct the attention of our readers to the manner in which the French traveller reasons. Page 17, vol. ii. of the English edition of his journey, he advances that the handsomely carved pieces of sarcophagi, which he finds in the so-called tombs of the kings, would be a most valuable addition to the gallery of the Louvre in Paris, if these sepulchres should prove to be in reality what their name seems to indicate. What M. de Saulcy is anxious to find out, soon assumes in his eyes a moral certainty. No wonder we hear him subsequently say—(p. 97)—"After an hour's rest, given to the delights of mocha and latakia, I sketched in my topographical observations of the morning, and indulged in agreeable reflections on the many important discoveries I have made during the fortunate excursion which I have just concluded." His arguments for the identification of the royal tombs shew further these leading features: First, M. de Saulcy accepts unconditionally the truth of Christian tradition, whilst he rejects the tradition of the natives (the latter hold David's tomb to be on the southern brow of Mount Zion). Then follow some demonstrations to prove what the tombs are *not*—demonstrations which, in order that we may give them credit, have first to bear the test and the testimony of the learned, as we have been led to suspect M. de Saulcy's quotations from ancient authors, by what we find noticed by M. Isambert in his review of M. de Saulcy's work in the *Bulletins de la Société de Géographie de Paris*, 1853, *Octobre*, *Novembre*, &c. Finally, he gives his arguments to prove what these tombs really *are*, namely, the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. Among others, he quotes all the Scripture places which refer to the burial of these kings. But what seems to me of the greatest importance, the certainty, namely, that the Bible means by the expression, "the city of David," the proper Mount Zion (2 Sam. v. 7, and 1 Kings viii. 1), and not the rocky undulating plain a good way from the wall to the north of the city, this the author skips over with some few bold, but untenable assertions. In reading the arguments of the French traveller, it ought to be remembered that the questions and objections he proposes are his own, not those of the unprejudiced reader. A strain of reasoning twisted together in that manner causes the reader to run on insensibly in the harness of the author, and consequently he loses

English mile further to the north-west, and presenting, likewise, an artificial cave with a beautifully sculptured entrance, and not fewer than sixty-eight niches for

his own free judgment, and gets unwillingly and unwittingly ensnared in the ideas of the author.

But in order to have the Scriptures, above alluded to, clearly under the eye, I insert the following passages:—We read

Of Solomon,.....that "He was buried in the city of David his father," 1 Kings xi. 43, and 2 Chron. ix. 31.

Of Rehoboam,..... "With his fathers, in the city of David," 1 Kings xiv. 31; or "in the city of David," 2 Chron. xii. 16.

Of Abijam,..... "In the city of David," 1 Kings xv. 8; 2 Chr. xiv. 1.

Of Asa,..... "With his fathers, in the city of David his father," 1 Kings xv. 24; or, "in his own sepulchre, which he had made for himself in the city of David," 2 Chron. xvi. 14.

Of Jehoshaphat,..... "With his fathers, in the city of David," 1 Kings xxii. 50, and 2 Chron. xxi. 1.

Of Ahaziah..... "His servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre, with his fathers, in the city of David," 2 Kings ix. 28. (What can be clearer than this Scripture? Jerusalem in a general, and the city of David in a limited sense, are positively distinguished the one from the other. M. de Saulcy seems to have taken no notice of it.)

Of Jehoiada the High Priest—"In the city of David among the kings," 2 Chron. xxiv. 16.

Of Amaziah,..... "At Jerusalem with his fathers, in the city of David," 2 Kings xiv. 20; and "with his fathers, in the city of Judah," 2 Chr. xxv. 28. (Here, again, the Bible distinguishes Jerusalem from the city of David.)

Of Jotham,..... "With his fathers in the city of David his father," 2 Kings xv. 38; and "in the city of David," 2 Chron. xxvii. 9.

Of Hezekiah,..... "In the chiefest (or highest) of the sepulchres of the sons of David," 2 Chron. xxxii. 33.

Of Josiah,..... "In his own sepulchre," 2 Kings xxiii. 30; and "in the sepulchres of his fathers," 2 Chron. xxxv. 24.

corpses. Tradition will have it, that this was the sepulchral cave of the members of the Sanhedrin, probably on account of the number of the niches being so nearly the seventy, of which that council was

Of the other kings who were not buried in the royal sepulchres, though "in the city of David," we read

Of Jehoram,..... "They buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings," 2 Chron. xxi. 20. The corresponding place in 2 Kings viii. 24, has only, "With his fathers in the city of David."

Of Joash,..... "In the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings," 2 Chron. xxiv. 25; and, more simply, "With his fathers in the city of David," according to 2 Kings xii. 21.

Of Azariah (or Uzziah)—"With his fathers in the city of David," 2 Kings xv. 7; "With his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper," 2 Chron. xxvi. 23.

Of Ahaz,..... "With his fathers in the city of David," 2 Kings xvi. 20; "In the city, even in Jerusalem, but they brought him not into the sepulchre of the kings of Israel," 2 Chron. xxviii. 27.

Of Manasseh,.... "In the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzzah," 2 Kings xxi. 18; "In his own house," 2 Chron. xxxiii. 20.

And of Amon,... "In his sepulchre in the garden of Uzzah," 2 Kings xxi. 26.

From these passages, taken in connexion with 2 Sam. v. 7, and 1 Kings viii. 1, it appears to me that one cannot easily be led to adopt the hyperbolical views of M. de Saulcy, that the sepulchres in question, to the north of the city, had ever contained the remains of David and his successors. What plainer expressions could Holy Writ employ than those here adduced, to point out the locality of the sepulchres of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless, the error of the French traveller goes so far, that he himself says of the expression, "In the city of Jerusalem" (see the sepulchre of Ahaz): "It appears to me impossible to take this expression in the literal meaning" (vol. ii. p. 176). So God's Word must give way before M. de Saulcy's hypothesis! Meanwhile, we are happy to say that M. Quatremère, in the *Journal des Savants*, vols. 1851–1853, has fully shewn what value we must place upon M. de Saulcy's discoveries. We beg to refer those of our readers who would make themselves better acquainted with the value of that work, to the judgments pronounced upon it by this periodical, and by that of the *Société de Géographie de Paris* before mentioned.

composed. Archæologists find much still to explore over the whole extent of this ground, notwithstanding all the explorations that have already taken place. Graves, old ruined cisterns, but, most of all, the circular sweep of the so-called third wall, have induced antiquarians to take many a walk hither. Without making pretence to antiquarian learning, I too could not resist the desire to look for the foundations of Agrippa's wall, which I did, however, with no better success than others. And, indeed, here as well as in other places in and round Jerusalem, I consider it impossible without excavations to make any further discoveries; for stones and rubbish have so altered the whole face of the ground from what it must formerly have been, that I should not wonder at all were future excavations to lead to great changes in the received topography of Jerusalem. It strikes me, therefore, that it is needless, my friend, to repeat the descriptions and conjectures of others who have written about Jerusalem. After all my wanderings round and through the city, I have really nothing new to add to the old things already known. On the contrary, I feel much rather inclined to hold that the course of many of the ancient streets was far from being what it is represented in the Jerusalem of our days. Thus, for example, the Via dolorosa. It speaks for itself, that as Golgotha must have had quite a different site from what is represented, the Passion-way cannot have run along the streets that are pointed out. The direction given now to the Via dolorosa is only according to a tradition which first came into the world long after the Crusades. You must have been struck with the great want of unanimity among the various authors

that have written about Jerusalem. This diversity of view does not surprise me. First, both sacred and profane statements are exceedingly difficult to be reconciled with the present condition of the city; then, again, only consider that the surface ground of the ancient Jerusalem lies in some places not less than forty or fifty feet under the rubbish. What people at present consider to be a height, may hereafter be found to be nothing but rubbish. I believe that in most places it will not be possible to bring out a decisive opinion with regard to their identification until a total removal of the rubbish shall have taken place. That this cannot be done under the present order of things, is a matter of course. It would require nothing less than the demolition and entire rebuilding of the city. But shall we say that this will never take place? What is there, according to man's judgment, more improbable than that the Jews, the offscourings of all nations, shall return in honour and in power to the land of their forefathers? Yet what hath God more firmly promised? "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee," * stands on record, and we believe that thus it shall be. As fully as it has been fulfilled: "Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation;" † "Zion shall be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest;" ‡ "And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons;" § as true as the word of Jesus stands to this day,

* Isaiah lx. 10. † Isaiah lxiv. 10. ‡ Jer. xxvi. 13; Mic. iii. 12. § Jer. ix. 11.

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," * so truly shall He also fulfil His promises: "I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people;" † "Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall be safe;" ‡ "Jerusalem shall be holiness, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more;" § "The Lord shall comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem." ‖ Already has Jerusalem been conquered eighteen times. First, by the men of Judah and Simeon (Judges i. 1–8). Then by David (2 Sam. v. 1–10, and 1 Chron. xi. 4–8), because notwithstanding its conquest by Judah, the Jebusites were still masters of the city. Under Rehoboam, Jerusalem was taken by Shishak, king of Egypt (1 Kings xiv. 25–28, and 2 Chron. xii. 2–12), but, pacified with the treasures of the House of the Lord, Shishak withdrew. After that, the city fell into the hands of Jehoash, king of Israel (2 Kings xiv. 13, 14), who glutted his revenge by breaking down a part of the wall of the city. Restored by Uzziah and by Hezekiah, Jerusalem long remained the metropolis of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar took it from Jehoiakim (2 Kings xxiv. 10–16), and plundered it thoroughly. Zedekiah's revolt from him brought his army again before the city, this time to destroy it utterly (2 Kings xxv.; Jer. xxxix. and lii.) Rebuilt by Nehemiah, at the close of the seventy years' captivity, Jerusalem, after having been spared by Alexander the Great, was taken by Ptolemy the son of Lagus, king of Egypt, in the year 320 B.C. A

* Luke xxi. 24. † Isaiah lxv. 18, 19. ‡ Jer. xxxiii. 16.
§ Joel iii. 17. ‖ Zech. i. 17.

period of struggles betwixt Egypt and Syria for the possession of Canaan and Jerusalem, led afterwards to the city's being subjected to many partial demolitions and restorations. The Maccabees remained in possession of Jerusalem, amid these its vicissitudes, for about an hundred years, until Pompey took the city in the year B.C. 63, through the fault of the Maccabean chiefs, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, who were quarrelling about the supreme power. Herod besieged and took Jerusalem in the year 37 before Christ, and filled it with horrid bloodshed. Jerusalem was, for the eleventh time, taken by Titus, A.D. 70. Then there took place that frightful devastation foretold by Daniel, and so pointedly referred to by the Lord himself. Yet this devastation, although the most frightful of all, was by no means the last, for Julius Severus, in 134; Chosroes, king of Persia, in 614; the emperor Heraclius, in 629; Omar, in 636; the Crusaders, under Godfrey of Bouillon, in 1099; Saladin, in 1137; and finally, Sultan Selim, in 1517, made themselves masters of Jerusalem, each of them making the city, which was ever and anon rebuilt, to smoke with blood and flames. The Jerusalem we see now consists of houses that have been built out of and upon the rubbuish of a city that has thus been, wholly or partially, destroyed in these *eighteen* conquests. The heights and valleys within its walls underwent, moreover, great alterations under the Maccabees and the Romans, for strategical purposes. Can we wonder, then, that people hitherto should have groped in the dark when endeavouring to trace back all the particular localities of the Jerusalem of Solomon, of Hezekiah, of Nehe-

miah, and of Josephus? It strikes me that the wonder is, that there exists yet so much to enable us to form a general idea of the situation of old Jerusalem.

Shall I now, after making these remarks, tell you of all my wanderings in and about the city, taking you with me step by step? What use or advantage could you derive from this? I repeat, new discoveries in the way of antiquities I have made none, and descriptions of all the particular spots in Jerusalem, the convents, the churches, the pools, the houses with which legends are associated, already given very fully in so many other books of travels, I have neither inclination nor time to give. I must even beg of you to allow my pen to rest entirely for to-day, after having been engaged with you for so many hours at a stretch.

30th April.

What the other day I meant to tell you, my dear friend, I will now add. Last Sunday morning I had hardly taken my seat in the church (on *Zion*), when some one near me gave a nod and smile of recognition as an old friend. I could not recognise the face, and thought the person had mistaken me. But scarcely was the service over when I found my hand seized with warmth, and then recognised on a closer view at once the voice and the features of my friend T., a very dear brother to me in the Lord, with whom I had parted some months before in London, and who on the preceding day had with a fellow-traveller come to Jerusalem from Egypt by the way of the wilderness.

"But, my good T.," I exclaimed, "is this you? Who

could have recognised you under these moustaches and beard?"

"And you, too," he replied, "are no longer the same; your moustaches have so much altered you. Yet I had heard of your being in Jerusalem, and expected to find you in the church, which accounts for my having had the satisfaction of recognising you at once."

You may imagine what a happy meeting we had, and how much to ask and to tell each other. Next day T. came with his fellow-traveller, Mr H., to take up their quarters with Max Ungar. The latter had two excellent rooms unoccupied, and these they much preferred to the less free, and moreover much more costly, hotel.

The time of these two friends, however, was very limited; they had to leave Jerusalem at the beginning of the following week. The days, too, I set apart for the Holy City were fast coming to a close, and thus, after now having had the satisfaction of guiding them through it in all directions, and shewing them all the remarkable places, I hope to enjoy their company on my way to Shechem. They must then leave me, and prosecute their journey with all haste, whilst I have to proceed patiently and quietly with my surveying tour.

How much did I wish that you, too, could have been of the party! Once more to saunter over and about the Mount of Olives and the environs of Gethsemane; once more to visit Bethany, which lies only about forty minutes' walk from the St Stephen's gate, but quite concealed behind the Mount of Olives; once more to wander through the valleys round the city, to pause at the sepulchral caves or at the huge stones of

the old wall; once more to follow the track of the man who was born blind, where he probably climbed down with difficulty the stone steps of the small pool of Siloam; once more to make a tour to Bethlehem and Wadi-Urtas; all which has kept me occupied most delightfully for these last few days. There is something particularly gratifying in taking friends to certain spots dear to ourselves, when we know that they hold them in the same regard, and feel the same attachment to them. Nay, with respect to places that have obtained a high value in our eyes from their connexion with the life of Jesus, the life of Him "who hath loved us," this enjoyment is greatly increased. I need not explain this to you: you will quite understand me. It is under such circumstances that one feels most strongly what it is to be "one with Him, and one with each other."

Thus have I in more than one way found a spiritual Jerusalem in the Jerusalem here below; and as it may be said of all parts of the world, so of Jerusalem in particular, it is not that we love the place as a place, but the experience of the Lord's love and grace in the communion with fellow-travellers towards the same heavenly country enjoyed in such a place, endears it to our hearts. What feast-days are the present to me! what a preparation for the useful but hard work of surveying! Feast-days! yes, such they are indeed; and as feast-days, too, I spend them. I have not touched my surveying instrument for some time. Its turn will come soon enough. Now it must rest.

Among the many travellers from Great Britain and the New World at present in Jerusalem, we have had

since yesterday Drs Eli Smith and Robinson. They had the politeness to pay me a visit. We communicated to each other our respective routes and journeyings thus far completed, and the new things that we had seen. You may easily imagine that from these communications there arose a mutual desire to have the results of our labours, after they should be completed, combined. Dr Robinson's historical knowledge is of great value for the geography of ancient Palestine. Yet he is no geographer, and my measurements, on the other hand, would be valuable for his historical researches. The combining of the two seemed to me to present the prospect of a highly useful result. Nevertheless, I have been thus far working in absolute independence, without support or help from any one, and the combining of my work with that of the American professor has on that side great difficulties. No doubt the name of Professor Robinson would prove an excellent passport for my surveys in finding their way to public notice and favour; but why should such a passport, methinks, be necessary?—if my labours are of any intrinsic value, then they will speak for themselves, and if not, then their going forth in connexion with an accredited name would be but decking one's self out in borrowed feathers. The publication of my surveys should in that case, too, have to take place in North America, a circumstance that might perhaps bring me some advantages, but unquestionably would involve also many difficulties. Perhaps, should life be spared to us till our journey's end, I shall be in a better condition than now to adopt such a plan in this matter

as may prove the most serviceable in promoting a knowledge of the geography of the Holy Land.

Meanwhile, Dr Eli Smith has compared his small Smalkande compass with my *boussole d'arpenterie* (surveying compass), as it appeared from the verification of some of our bearings that our angles occasionally differed. The result of this comparison is, that in some of the points of the compass, Dr Smith's instrument shews a difference of three or four degrees from mine. This has explained to me what had puzzled me on more than one occasion, when taking angles at places where they had been taken by Dr Robinson and Dr Smith on their journey in 1838 and 1839. Some of their angles agreed well with mine, but in all those that fell in the direction of the points alluded to, there was a difference of three, four, five degrees, and sometimes more. Dr Eli Smith, when on that journey, made use of the same compass that he is now using, and the error, arising probably from some inaccuracy in the marking off of the degrees on the compass-card, has thus passed into all his previous bearings. You will see at once that this must have much affected, and must now again affect, the accuracy of Robinson's map.

Dr Robinson finds much matter for research in Jerusalem. The archæology of the Holy City occupies an important part of his *Biblical Researches*. Yet Williams, Schultz, and others, have appeared since with their discoveries, theories, hypotheses, and controversies. The examination of these on the spot is of great consequence to the observant man. In so far as I may venture to express an opinion, I doubt much if

those who controvert Dr R.'s conclusions have sufficient grounds for doing so. The results of his present fresh researches, made after an interval of several years since his first visit to the Holy City, and after his having studied all the theories and discoveries announced by others since then, will be of the highest importance. One of the disputed points seemed clear to him at once, that of the alleged graves of Joseph of Arimathea and of Nicodemus in the church of the pretended Holy Sepulchre. Two holes in the natural rock are shewn in this church, as the graves of those two godly men, and some would fain have this to be a proof of the identity of the place with the garden of Joseph where the Redeemer was laid in a new grave. Dr Robinson has, on a close inspection of these holes in the rock, found them to be scarcely four feet long, so that they never could have served as graves.

Another point of inquiry was the course of the western wall of the former area of the temple—the Haram-el-Sherîf of the present day. According to the ground-plan drawn out by the officers of the Royal Engineers, Messrs Aldrich and Symonds, in 1841, that wall has at its south-western extremity two *rentrant* angles which do not appear in the ground-plan of the architect, Mr F. Catherwood, made in 1835. It is known that while the Royal Engineer officers made a complete trigonometrical survey of the city, still they were not allowed to come within the walls of the Haram-el-Sherîf. Mr F. Catherwood had not the same opportunity of making such a careful survey of the city; but, on the other hand, he was allowed to come within the circuit of the wall referred to. Hence

it was likely that while the trigonometrical plan of the British Engineer officers may be fully trusted in all other respects, the course of the western temple wall was more correctly given by Mr Catherwood. Such appears to be the fact. Through the kindness of Dr Macgowan, who happened to have under his medical care a member of the family of the Pasha, residing in a house built directly upon the western wall, Dr Robinson had the good fortune to be able to convince himself of it personally. From the roof of that house one can follow the whole course of the wall, and its occupants gave Dr Macgowan's friend all the opportunity they had in their power to give, for his looking over the precincts of the haram. The learned traveller invited me to accompany him, for "surely in the mouth of *two* witnesses shall all truth be established;" but Dr Macgowan wisely judged that in order to avoid all suspicion, it were better to go about the matter with the fewest persons possible. I place the fullest confidence in the testimony of Dr Robinson and Dr Macgowan; and in the ground-plan sent you along with this, and which is a reduced copy of the survey made by the British Engineer officers, I have corrected the line of wall as indicated by Catherwood. The American professor was particularly surprised that this error should have appeared in such an official document. Taking into account, however, the circumstances that led to it, one will see less cause to wonder, and it would be injudicious on that account to reject the whole survey as not to be trusted.*

* After my return from the Holy Land, I was favoured with an inspection of all the original surveys of the Engineer officers here referred

Speaking of the Haram-el-Sherîf, I am reminded that I have not yet told you anything about Mount Moriah. Well, then, I beg you will allow me to compensate for this omission, by sending you a drawing of a view of Jerusalem taken from the Mount of Olives. The descriptions and illustrations of Bartlett, including likewise the contributions of Catherwood, and the finely executed plates of Roberts, will give you all that has as yet been discovered. I may add, that the work by Dr R. Richardson which I have already quoted (*Travels along the Mediterranean*, &c., 1816-18), contains a detailed description of the interior of the haram. In consequence of a surgical operation, and further medical aid which required his attendance on Omar Effendi, one of the highest persons attached to the mosque, he became such a favourite of his patient, that the latter allowed him four times to see the whole interior of the Haram-el-Sherîf. Only one subterranean vault under the mosque was not opened to him; excepting that, there was not a spot that he did not examine, including even the ancient vaults under the area of the temple, of which he gives a minute description, and the grotto under the south-east angle of the great surrounding wall of the temple, in which the Mohammedans show a sarcophagus as the coffin of *Sidn Aisa* (the Lord Jesus). Dr Richardson's idea is, that there is at least a possi-

to, at the London Board of Ordnance; and I am happy, from what I saw of those trigonometrical sheets, to testify to the accuracy of their ground-plan of Jerusalem, as given to the public in Williams' *Holy City*. Should Dr Robinson's depreciatory remarks on that survey on account of the error that has slipt into its delineation of the western wall of the haram, lead any one to distrust or undervalue it, I hope that the above consideration will help to correct any such feeling.

bility of identity, as it is probable that the first Christians brought to this place the sarcophagi of Mary, Zacharias, and John the Baptist (and so also of the Redeemer); at least, says he, they were shewn there in the time of the early Christians. Highly valuing in other respects Dr Richardson's communication, still I cannot dissemble my scepticism with respect to these particulars.

In your last letter, you ask me to tell you my impressions as, seated on the Mount of Olives, I looked down on Mount Moriah, Ornan's threshing-floor, the place where Jehovah's glory dwelt above the mercy-seat between the cherubim, the place where now for many centuries the blasphemous crescent has crowned a Turkish mosque. Let me ask you, with the drawings of Jerusalem and Omar's mosque before you, with your eye on Christ crucified for you, and with your finger pointing to God's promises, and to His command: "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature"—what do you feel? Does a voice come to you, too, from the crescent on the roof of the mosque? Are you reminded, by the cold indifference with which we Christians allow the followers of the false Prophet to forbid us, as "unbelieving dogs," to tread the soil on which Omar's mosque has been built, of the question put to Peter by Jesus: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"* And does not the slander put upon the Lord's name by a handful of miserable Turks, in the face of the Consuls of the five great European powers, who have taken up their residences within a few minutes' walk of the Haram-el-Sherîf, recall to you those words: "Them

* John xxi. 15–17.

who honour me I will honour, and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed"? * Mount Moriah is a witness to the whole earth against the Christians. May God give us the conquest of it, and its deliverance from being trodden upon by the Mohammedans, the enemies of Christ, with other weapons than those by means of which the Crusaders held it for a short period.

And the Place of wailing, outside, at the south-west corner of the old temple wall, where the Jews come on Fridays to lament and pray for the restoration of Jerusalem—do you inquire about it? Why—you know the place already, from engravings, descriptions, and panoramas. Take the Place of wailing along with you in your meditations on Mount Moriah. The one points to the other; and it is well that through the tears shed there by the Jews, even although those tears flow not from the fountain of true contrition, we be reminded of the sighing of Israel and of her promises of salvation.

Here I must stop for to-day, for I promised to be present at the *soirée* of the "Jerusalem Literary Society," and my watch tells me it is time I were on my way to it.

3d May.

The day is at last at hand when I must leave Jerusalem. While our luggage is preparing for its departure, I add these few lines. The meeting of the Literary Society was honoured with Dr Robinson's presence. Mr Finn read a paper on the Ramah of Samuel. He thought he had found it again in the ruins of Ramah, near Rachel's grave, and also that the existence of the name Rameh at that place was a fact hitherto quite

* 1 Sam. ii. 30.

unknown. Had Mr Finn been acquainted with the works of Le Trèsdevot, 1608, C. de Bruyn, the *Reisebüch des H. Landes*, 1584, and suchlike old pilgrims' narratives, he would have known that the Ramah of Jeremiah xxxi. 15, and of Matthew ii. 18, was known in those days to be only a few hundred paces from Rachel's grave. The so-called miraculous Pulse-field, and the Tower of Jacob, may also be found mentioned in such old pilgrim books. About these I will no longer detain you.*

Early yesterday morning I had another walk to Bethany. You know that it is now but a poor hamlet, called by the Arabs after Lazarus, el-Asirieh. Into the alleged tomb of Lazarus I once more entered with a lighted wax-candle, but this second exploration no more convinced me of its identity with the true sepulchral cave than the first. People point to the ruins of a tower as the house of Simon the leper. A pious traveller has somewhere made the remark that tradition always points to heights and towers as holy places, as if to place in stronger relief the contrast between the humble, lowly, and mean habiliments of the Gospel, and its own love of pomp and show.

* In connexion both with the Jerusalem Literary Society and the topography of Jerusalem, I may here mention that in a letter dated May 5, 1853, Mr Finn sent me the following communication:—"The Jerusalem Literary Society is advancing in interest; and an excellent paper has been lately read in the German language by Pastor Valentiner of our Prussian congregation on the Topography of the Holy City, in which he contends for a considerable extension of Mount Zion to the northwards—that, therefore, the present castle near the Jaffa gate is not Hippicus—that Robinson's Tyropeon is not correct, and the Church of the Resurrection is not on Calvary. You may have heard that the King of Prussia has offered us the unconditional use of a library which he is about to establish in the Evangelical Hospice of Jerusalem."

On my way homewards, instead of taking the gently sloping road round the Mount of Olives, I went up the steep path that leads to its top from the south-east. Hereabouts, hard by Bethany, must Bethphage have lain, if we are to believe the narratives of the old pilgrims. In the journey of the Count Palatine Alexander and of Count Lewis of Nassau, 1495–96, that village is mentioned thus:—"So man denselben Berg hinab gehet, ist die Stadt Beth-phage"—(As you come to the foot of that same hill [the Mount of Olives] you find the town of Bethphage); and John, Count of Solms, in 1483, speaks of Bethphage as lying at the foot of the Mount of Olives, close to the Church of St Pelagius. Le Trèsdevot, 1608, places Bethphage on the right-hand side of the path half-way up the hill as you ascend from Bethany, which is confirmed by De Bruyn. In looking over my books after my return home in the evening, I found that Dr Olin had actually discovered at that place, that is, on a south-eastern projecting shoulder of the Mount of Olives, the ruins of a village, or rather the foundations of houses, and also a large cistern hewn in the rock. We may thus suppose Bethphage to have been there. The spot lies not full ten minutes' walk to the north of Bethany.

On my return home from this morning's excursion I found an invitation from the Crawfords to accompany them to the convent of the Cross, or, as the Arabs call it, Deir-Masalabeh. It lies between two and three miles to the west of the city, in a valley to the west of the broad plain of Rephaïm. We walked thither in company with various friends, over the hill of Gihon,

and along the Upper pool; some of the ladies were already before us mounted on horses or asses, and others followed in the course of the day. It was a pic-nic full of all the joy that Christian friendship can produce. Did I live at Jerusalem, assuredly I should often seek repose under the shades of the beautiful olive-trees of Deir-Masalabeh.

But how came this convent by the name of that of the Cross? The legend tells us, that a cypress-tree, planted by Abraham, and carefully watered by Lot, was cut down by Solomon, in order that it might be used as a beam in the temple. Nevertheless, however this beam might be pushed or turned, it never could be made to fit, and so it was thrown out on the ground. But, behold, Pilate becomes governor, and by his orders, the miraculous beam must serve as the cross of our Lord. This legend may be seen portrayed in glaring colours, but very coarse, in the chapel of the monastery. We were taken round the chapel by one or two monks who inhabit this massive building; after admiring the beautiful mosaic of the chapel floor, a thin wax-light was put into our hands, and with that we followed the monk while he led us down below the high altar. And what think you was shewn to us there? Why, the hole in which the miraculous cypress had once stood!

Had time permitted, I should have availed myself of this opportunity of visiting, also, the Valley of Roses, and the Convent of St John in the Wilderness, which lies about as far to the west of Deir-Masalabeh as that is to the west of Jerusalem. But I had to hasten back to the city in order to make some further arrangements

for my departure. You, no doubt, recollect that I was left without a servant. I succeeded only yesterday in procuring one, and he, too, a blockhead of a fellow; but I had no choice, and must contrive to do my best with him whether I will or no. With regard to mules, too, I had difficulties to overcome. Owing to the great number of travellers now in Jerusalem, the proprietors of mules and horses have raised their prices to half as much again as they were to be had for six weeks ago. Hence I must pay fifteen piastres per day for each horse or mule I employ. It would have been better for me to have made an agreement once for all at the beginning of my journey with one of the mule-drivers of Sidon or Beirût. But it cannot now be helped, and I must needs submit with patience.

In another point of view, the remainder of my journey promises some improvement on the past. A young German divine, whom I had more than once met with at Bishop Gobat's and at the deaconesses', expressed a wish to accompany me for a part of my journey. He travels with great simplicity, without a dragoman, without a travelling-canteen, and with a tent so simple, that in case of need it can be packed on his own horse. His baggage and travelling articles, accordingly, will not be much in the way. Neither has he any servant. Whether my one-eyed Theodori, who runs always with bent knees, as if he meant to fall asleep when walking, will suffice as a servant for us both, experience alone can tell. I am to set off to-day before him with my two English friends by the convent of Mar-Saba to the Dead Sea and Jericho. Mr Finn is to join us at Elisha's Fountain; from that

to proceed to Bethel, along the way that Joshua must have taken with his army when he took Ai. Ai has not yet been discovered, and we cannot on this occasion pass without giving our attention to it. I met my German friend, the young divine, yesterday afternoon, at the fountain of Rogel (en-Rogel) in the King's gardens, at the south-eastern foot of Zion, where the valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat unite together.

"Are you quite prepared, my dear sir," I asked, "to start on Monday morning?"

"So early as Monday morning? Why so soon? It is impossible."

"But I gave you timely warning; and as my English friends, too, have agreed to accompany me, I cannot put off my departure. We go, as I said, to Mar-Saba, the Dead Sea, the Jordan, Jericho, and Bethel; and then" . . . . .

"Well, now, that will take you three days. So long, then, shall I remain in Jerusalem, and hope on Wednesday evening to join you at Bethel."

"Very good! But be sure now to keep to your time. I will leave with you Theodori, my new servant, for your assistance. On Wednesday afternoon, then"——

"Ja, Ja, bestimt bis mitwoch," was the answer of my young friend, who found it difficult to tear himself away from Jerusalem.

Sunday, the last Sunday in Jerusalem, now dawned. It was one more real festal day, a day full of blessings. Mr Crawford preached in the morning from Titus iii. 5; we afterwards participated in the Holy Supper. When the afternoon services were over, I once more took a walk round Jerusalem with my English friends.

The sky was cloudy, but the sun now and then broke through the clouds. When we stood on the north-eastern height of the Scopus, we saw Jerusalem in a flood of light, whilst all the surrounding hills lay in shadow. We could not possibly have seen the royal city more brilliantly illuminated. We were deeply affected with the splendid spectacle before us, and felt thankful at having been privileged to see Jerusalem to such advantage before our departure. I can well understand, after such a sight, why Jerusalem was chosen by God before all the cities of the earth. Not because of its royal situation alone, but among many other reasons, because of that also. Yes, truly, Jerusalem, although her crown of royalty has been wrested from her head, although she has been sunk in dust and ashes, Jerusalem cannot conceal her royal descent.

Deeply moved, and filled with sad thoughts of our departure, we walked along Gethsemane and Absalom's pillar to the foot of Zion hill; we then ascended to enter the city, and went once more to contemplate the remains of the arch that erewhile belonged to the bridge which connected Zion and Moriah; and returned home through the noisome dirty streets of the Jewish quarter. The day was closed in meditations on the Word of God and in prayer at the Rev. Mr Crawford's, in the midst of a numerous circle of friends,—a day for me never to be forgotten.

And now, my friend, I leave Jerusalem: you, too, I must leave for the present. Our caravan is quite ready; I must, therefore hasten. With kindest regards, yours, &c.

FROM JERUSALEM BY JERICHO, AI, AND BETHEL, TO SHECHEM.

TOUR TO THE GHOR (JORDAN VALLEY).

BETHEL, *5th May.*

JUST imagine, my friend, it is now nearly ten o'clock at night, and no appearance as yet of my German fellow-traveller with Theodori! The distance from Jerusalem to this is hardly four hours. After sundown he cannot leave the city, as the gates are then shut; so that if he does not soon appear I must dread one or other alternative, either that he has quite forgotten that I am waiting for him here, or that he has lost his way and has arrived nobody knows where. A sad commencement this of our travelling in company, to be kept thus in anxiety and suspense owing to the non-fulfilment of a settled agreement. But I must exercise all the patience I can command, and perhaps he may ere long be here. Meanwhile let me tell you of the journey from Jerusalem to Bethel.

Hardly had I sealed my last letter to you, and sent Theodori with it to the post, when the voice of my friend T. made me suspect I was keeping the rest of the company waiting.

"What is keeping you so long?" he cried; "the kind-hearted Crawfords have been waiting for us more than ten minutes outside the Damascus gate, intending to give us a convoy."

And there, to be sure, they stood, those warm-hearted friends with whom it was so painful to part. We now formed quite a caravan. My English friends, who travel with all the comforts that one can any way command in this country, have a train of mules that might suffice for six persons instead of two, making my simple travelling equipage appear as nothing in comparison. Further, we had besides dragomans, servants, and mule-drivers, four Bedouïns to accompany us as guides, and also as an armed escort; for the consuls who represent the five great Powers of Europe at Jerusalem, to this day allow the Bedouïns that haunt the environs of the Holy City to levy on all travellers who wish to visit the Jordan a tribute of 100 piastres a-head, besides a sheep, or, by way of equivalent, an additional 40 piastres. This is one of those amazing instances of daring imposition whereof most travellers justly complain, and which are a consequence of the feeble and enervated government of the Turks.

Passing by the citadel and the city's western wall, through the valley of the Son of Hinnom, along the foot of Mount Zion, on the right hand side of the fountain En-Rogel, we followed for awhile the bed of the Cedron valley, passing by sepulchral caves and slender olive-trees. These, as we advanced, became fewer and fewer, until they altogether disappeared, while the wadi, with its waste and wild aspect, reminded me of our approach to the wilderness. For two hours did our Jerusalem friends accompany us, but then it became necessary that they should return, for we were getting too much among the encampments

of the Bedouïns, who might have caused them some annoyance on their way home. Having come to a rising ground above the wadi, and from which we had a last distant view of Jerusalem, we there took leave both of the city and our friends. We sent our heart-felt blessings after them, and theirs followed us to Mar-Saba, and wherever beyond it our steps might lead us.

The distance of Mar-Saba from Jerusalem is reckoned at about five hours. The road runs for the most part through or along the valley of the Cedron, which becomes ever wilder and barer the nearer it approaches the Dead Sea. The Convent of the Holy Saba is on the right or southern side of the valley, built upon and against perpendicular rocks. It is quite an eagle's nest, defended with walls and towers that would never suggest to any one the idea of a dwelling of peaceful inhabitants, but much rather of a strongly situated fortress. In fact it is a fortress, only without artillery and a garrison. And wherefore did its pious founder make it so unapproachable for all who would attempt to enter it unasked? The answer must be sought for in the bloody and plundering expeditions of the Bedouïns who inhabit the wilderness, and whose character receives from those strong and lofty convent walls certainly not a favourable although too true testimony. Yet not the plundering Bedouïns only, but the various conquerors of Palestine, the Romans, Syrians, Egyptians, Persians, and Turks, have, at different times, slaked their thirst for blood in the most savage manner on the poor monks. Hence also that practice of living concealed in holes among the rocks, of which so

many proofs are to be seen over the whole of this country.

The wadi of Mar-Saba is full of such caves, which are even made into regular houses, with walls and windows. Many of these dwellings in the rocks are found to have communications with each other; a small compensation for the disadvantage of living in what otherwise is like a habitation for wild beasts. The lofty perpendicular walls of rock in which these holes are found were, at certain times, the only asylums that remained for the persecuted Christians.

On our knocking at the gate of the convent, no one came to open it, but from an upper window in the tower near the gate, a voice was heard asking what we wanted.

"To see the convent," was the reply.

"Have you brought a letter of introduction from the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem?"

"No."

"Then you cannot be admitted."

"We have a baksheesh for you instead of a letter."

"Mûsh lasîm baksheesh. 'Katîb lasim, geiro lah!" (We care nothing for a baksheesh. We require a letter; nothing else will do.)

My friend H. thought this answer impertinent. But if his face was flushed with anger, the monk looked very coolly at us, and the door remained shut. His dragoman tried to convince the monk that we were friendly; 'twas all to no purpose. After the inhabitants of Mar-Saba had been twice annoyed by travellers, they had come to the determination of admitting none but such as came with letters of recom-

mendation from their superior at Jerusalem. Surely they were not to be blamed for this. I must even acknowledge that it shewed a friendly feeling on the part of the monk that he lowered a pitcher of water for us in a basket; he grudged our going away without a refreshing draught. But, no, for an Englishman to be refused admittance into his monastery by a beggarly Greek monk, was too bad! "If you will thus drive away us Englishmen," said my friend, "then we will have nothing to do with your water." And they at once turned away from the convent to pitch their tents at a well which is found a quarter of an hour's distance to the north-west of Mar-Saba.

I was amused at the wounded pride of my good fellow-travellers, and their being worsted by the Mar-Saba monk, who, of course, understood not a word that they said.

We were encamped at the well until next morning, favoured by a splendid evening, unmolested by troublesome and inquisitive villagers, and cheered by the enjoyment of heartfelt unaffected friendship. For myself, this mode of travelling I felt to be quite a holiday affair, accustomed as I had been, after the fatiguing labours of the day, to spend the evening surrounded by a number of natives, from whom I endeavoured to extract the information I required respecting the country and its villages and ruins. That day I had no labour at all; two topographical memoranda in my pocket-book, and a sketch of Mar-Saba, as seen from the Valley, was all that I did. But it is well at times to enjoy a holiday. It is very likely that hard enough work awaits me, and I will, therefore, take repose as

long as I can enjoy it. Had not this road been so many times both ridden over and written upon already, I should not have traversed it with so little labour. And as respects Mar-Saba, why I have missed little through the gate having been shut upon us; for, from the descriptions of Russegger, Wilson, and many other travellers, I can very well picture to myself how the interior of the convent must look with its courts, its cells, its church, oratory, burying-ground, rude paintings, and small library.

Shech Hammed, the chief of our Bedouïn escort, headed our party next morning, to shew us the way. We went now to the Dead Sea, following the ordinary tour which travellers take from Jerusalem either by Mar-Saba, or by Nabi-Mûsa (the grave of Moses, according to the Mohammedans), lying to the north-east of Mar-Saba, to the Salt Sea, in order to get an idea of that deep sunken lake, and then return by the Pilgrims' bathing-place at the Jordan and by Jericho. We had now a constant alternation of ascents and descents—mostly descents, however—over hills of a yellow hue, and covered with grass already scorched into hay. The further you proceed, the more does the scenery assume the character of the hills to the south-west of the Dead Sea, yet not quite so desolate and frightful. The road passes at last through a valley full of turnings and windings, with sharp-crested hills of white soft limestone, mixed with a brown gritty sand and asphaltic stones, into a wide gently-sloping plain, the extremity of which is washed by the salt waters of the Dead Sea. This plain is fully an hour broad, and is as it were torn up and seamed with clefts and chasms.

Those deep furrows have been ploughed in the clayey plain by the winter torrents that come down from the hills. Tamarisks, juniper-bushes (*retem*), and reeds, the vegetable productions peculiar to those tracts, deprive the plain of the dreariness of its disagreeable ashy colour.

Once more did I stand on the shore of the Dead Sea; this time at its northern end, and at the small peninsula that there runs into the water.* While I was relating to my friends what I had seen a month ago at the opposite extremity of the sea, another company of English travellers whom we had met with more than once at Jerusalem, came up from a different direction. They were from Jericho, having taken the route from Jerusalem by that place first, and would probably pitch their tents that evening at the spot where we had struck ours in the morning. We put a few pebbles from the shore into our pockets and rode on.

The day was uncommonly hot. Already we were reminded that we were in the month of May. Spring had here gone by; there was all the glow of summer heat, and a true tropical temperature prevailed in the deep-sunk dale. We were all of us panting under the sultry climate as we traversed the hour and a half's distance that separates the northern end of the Dead Sea from the Pilgrims' bathing-place on the banks of the Jordan. No great distance, to be sure; but to us

* M. de Saulcy calls it a small island, and says he found it "covered with rubbish." What has that traveller not seen? We found the peninsula covered with coarse gravel like the shore, but we saw nothing like rubbish. M. de S.'s guides gave him as the name of this spot "Redjom Looth," *i. e.*, Lot's Cairn.—See *Journey Round the Dead Sea*, vol. ii. p. 52.

it seemed long, from the oppressive heat and the dazzling reflection of the sun's rays from the light, yellowish-gray coloured, clayey plains. Ah, how welcome was the shade afforded us by the willows and the tamarisks on the banks of the river! Fortunately, we were now alone and untrammelled by any other company. We could splash and wash accordingly, to our hearts' content, taking care, nevertheless, not to allow ourselves to go too far from the bank, the river at this place being deep and having a strong current.

Our caravan, with the exception of Hassenein, the dragoman of my friends, and three of our Bedouïns, had meanwhile gone to Jericho, which lies at about an hour and a half's distance to the west of the Jordan, in order that our tents might be pitched and everything ready against our arriving there in the evening. Had the time favoured, I would willingly have spent the whole night on the banks of the Jordan, it was so delightful and . . . . . .

Here I had to break off my narrative, having been interrupted by the arrival of my German fellow-traveller. Leaving Jerusalem at a late hour, he had lost the track at el-Bireh, the ancient Beeroth, and in the darkness of the night found no small difficulty in recovering it. How he has contrived to get safe here, I do not know. Much had the enthusiastic young divine to tell me. Many kind words and good wishes he brought me, too, from the good deaconesses at whose establishment he had lodged. The first anniversary, he said, of the existence of their institution at Jerusalem, which took place a few days ago, had

inspired them with fresh courage, faith, and love in their arduous work.

"And ah!" he finally added to all the particulars he had to tell me about his last two days, "what had I not to experience in the church of the Holy Sepulchre!"

"How?"—I rejoined, with my curiosity much excited—"tell me what you met with there."

"*What!* why that I cannot tell you; I experienced things unutterable. I allowed myself in the evening, along with some other friends, to be shut up in the church of the Sepulchre for the whole night, that I might spend it in communion with my Saviour; and what I then felt I cannot possibly describe: these are things which must be experienced in order to be understood."

"H'm, h'm! Do you then really believe that that is the spot where the Crucifixion and Burial took place?"

"Do you not believe it?" he added, somewhat indignant at my doubts upon the subject.

"Come, my good friend," I rejoined, "here is a cup of tea for you and some bread. You are fatigued with your travelling and wandering about, and to-morrow we must be early on the march. Now, then, take some refreshment, and let us not be long in enjoying a night's repose among Bethel's rocks."

"Things unutterable!" I said to myself; "unspeakable things felt in the deceiving Church of the Sepulchre! What will not our imagination conceive? Have but a little patience, my dear brother; ere you

embark at Beirût, the Lord will shew you that the revelation of Himself in the hearts of those who seek Him is totally independent of place and situation."

While my friend is asleep I proceed with my narrative. I broke off at the banks of the Jordan. Well, then, after our bath, we sat down on our travelling-carpet, to enjoy the refreshment of a cup of coffee and a chibouk. We spoke of the possibility of Beth-abara, where John baptised, having stood here, as tradition will have it. The Evangelist John tells us, however (i. 28), "These things were done in Beth-abara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptising." After his baptism, the Saviour was immediately driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, from whence, when the days of the temptation were ended, He seems a second time to have come to Beth-abara (John i. 29-43), where Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, first met with him. Now, if we compare John i. 44, with John ii. 1, we shall find that Beth-abara could not have been more than two and a half days' journey distant from Cana of Galilee. This brings Beth-abara nearly to the latitude of the ford in the Jordan, where the highway from Nablous to Es-Salt crosses it, at a rough guess, at least seven hours more to the north than the Pilgrims' bathing-place. If this Beth-abara be identical with the Beth-bara of Judges viii. 24, then the situation of that place (near the highway from Es-Salt) agrees well with the Bible narrative of Gideon's pursuit of the Midianites.

Another question occurs, as to the place where the Israelites, under the conduct of Joshua, crossed the Jordan, while the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the bed of the river, from the waters

having been arrested in their course. The Scriptures say: "And the people passed right against Jericho;" * "and to the plains of Jericho;" † and "encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho." ‡ The site of Gilgal is not known, nor Shittim, the place from which they removed early in the morning to pass over Jordan. § Still we know enough of Jericho to be certain that the Pilgrims' bathing-place is not the place of the passage, being too much to the north. By approaching the river from Jericho with an easterly or east-south-east course, one would probably arrive at the identical place; perhaps there was no ford existing, but the Lord dried up the river's bed for his people: "That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord that it is mighty, that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever." ‖ How "the Jordan overflows its banks all the time of harvest," ¶ we saw by the trees under the shadow of which we rested. The harvest-time is now past in the fields of Jericho. The waters, accordingly, have now subsided, leaving a stream of about fifty yards in breadth; but along the banks there still extends a broad morass, almost as far as the trees reach, from which it may be seen, that when the river is swollen, it must be about twice as broad as in ordinary times. In the days of old, when Mount Hermon, and the hills to the right and left of the Jordan, were much more abundantly drenched with rain and snow than since the forests have disappeared from the face of the land, the river, from a greater accession of water, must naturally

* Joshua iii. 16. † Ibid. iv. 13. ‡ Ibid. iv. 19.
§ Ibid. iii. 1. ‖ Ibid. iv. 24. ¶ Ibid. iii. 15.

have been broader than it is at the present day. Therewithal, I have been surprised at the incorrect representations of the Jordan which are found in so many of the sketch-books of the Holy Land. The river in these is generally made far too broad, and the hills are brought too near. The vale of the Jordan is a long extended plain, reaching from the Sea of Tiberias to the Dead Sea, varying from two to four hours in breadth east and west, and almost quite barren and desert. This broad plain is shut in on either side by high hills, whilst in the middle winds the Jordan, whose foaming waters roll along concealed by the verdant edging of their banks. Not, however, that this vale is altogether so scorched as to be perfectly uninhabitable. Divers tribes of Bedouïns have made it the place of their habitation. They call it El-Ghor, that is, the plain, and sow it in winter, as soon as the early rains have loosened the yellowish-gray marly soil. Villagers, too, from the hills of Ephraim come down to some parts of the Ghor to plough and sow, and seem to live on a good footing with the Bedouïns. The harvest in the southern part of the plain comes on as early as April; more to the north it comes in May, as the summer season falls later in proportion as the level of the ground rises. As soon as harvest is over the villagers return to their homesteads, and the Bedouïns wander about, encamping wherever they find sufficient water and herbage for their flocks. The Ghor is not unfrequently visited by Bedouïns from the eastern side of Jordan, especially after the gathering of the harvest. These come for the sole purposes of plunder and murder; they are the veriest scourges

of the land, and are with truth called by the other Bedouïns Beni-Seitan, that is, children of the Devil. Hence also so few people travel through the Ghor, and that this region is still so much a *terra incognita*. And, truly, one has only to read the journal of Lieutenant Molyneux in order to be altogether deterred from attempting to direct his steps thither.* Lieutenant Lynch no doubt accomplished his important Jordan-tour with the best result (at least so far as respects the river itself; of the land in the Ghor he saw and says little); but his expedition was so formidably armed that the Bedouïns did not deem it advisable to attack them. The vexations and difficulties experienced by Molyneux cost him his life. Hardly had he returned to Beirût when he sank under the deadly Syrian fever. When I think of these difficulties, and in particular of the overpowering heat of this tract of country, I begin to hesitate whether I am in a condition to visit the Ghor in its central and northern parts. Still, I should like to be a little better acquainted with the highway which runs right through the Ghor from Jericho to Beisan, a highway, too, which, in all likelihood, the Saviour passed along in his journeys from Galilee to Judah and back. Perhaps the Lord will help me.

It was not until five in the afternoon that we reached Jericho, which lies at about an hour and a half's distance from the Pilgrims' bathing-place. The heat was intolerable. Not until the sun went down, and we sat among the thorn-bushes which surround the hamlet

* See *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, vol. xviii. p. 104, &c

er-Riha, listening to the melody of the birds, while the moon rose with broad blood-red disk over the hills of Gilead, did the temperature fall. You must know el-Riha well from books and engravings. Do you remember a quadrangular building in the shape of a tower, to which tradition has attached the name of the house of Zaccheus? Well, then, our tents had been pitched close to that tower, now the dilapidated habitation of half a dozen Turkish soldiers. Assuredly this was far from being to our satisfaction, for the ground under us was literally composed of the heaps of dung from the horses and asses of thousands of pilgrims who had encamped here a fortnight before on the night previous to their turning to the banks of Jordan.

I know not what could have led our stupid guides to select such a wretched camping ground. There was plenty of room for a better choice, but the tents were pitched, and we were too much overcome with the heat and fatigue to be much disposed for a shift. Of solitude we had certainly no reason to complain. No fewer than twelve travelling parties were encamped here with their tents. What a motley and lively sight! And then the horses and mules, the servants and Bedouïns; it had much in it of resemblance to a fair. Here sat one party enjoying their dinner at their tent door; there lay wearied travellers stretched out on their carpet, enjoying their pipes; yonder was a gentleman, with his wife and daughter, who must needs accompany him to Palestine, walking about among the mimosa bushes; elsewhere a troop of Arabs were contending about a couple of piastres, to the value of which one of them had cheated the rest; and when I

turned my eye from this busy foreground to the quiet distance in the north and south, it rested upon the mountains of Ephraim, Bashan, Gilead, and Moab, and upon the waters of the Dead Sea, as if to call my thoughts off from the vain scene around me to the solemn days of the long bygone past.

Were it not already so far on in the night, I should indulge myself a little more in musings on er-Riha, and its days of old. But I am now quite spent, and must lay down my pen. You may, perhaps, be able to imagine how Israel's army, and Rahab, and Joshua, and Elijah and Elisha, and Zaccheus, and blind Bartimeus, have been passing before my mind. After all, of what consequence is it to find ourselves in such or such a place in the expectation of the mind being benefited by meditating on the persons who once there lived? The Holy Ghost alone, not localities, can teach us the things that are of the Spirit.

Until late in the evening I lay on the warm ground to gaze at the glorious starry sky, musing on many things, and thinking, too, on the journey of the day following from Jericho to Bethel. That this journey has been safely accomplished you now see from the date of this letter; but yesterday morning, when, according to agreement, we met Mr Finn with his tent at the so-called 'Ain-es-Sultan, the fountain of Elisha, the prospect seemed far from favourable. The Bedouïns utterly refused to escort us to Bethel; first, in their usual way, alleging all sorts of pretended difficulties; the road was too steep, and the mountain-track too dangerous for our laden mules; the distance was too great to be accomplished in one day; there were Beni-

Seitan Bedouïns in the neighbourhood, and other such-like hindrances, which seemed to us not to have a shadow of truth in them. The English consul thought indeed that he would be able to prevail upon the Bedouïns to fulfil an engagement, for which they had already received half the stipulated remuneration; but his authority had not the slightest effect: they swore with the most solemn oaths that there was no possible way from Jericho to Bethel.

"Well, then," said Mr Finn to us, "we shall go by er-Rameh to Bethel; for I cannot believe that the Bedouïns would asseverate it with so many oaths, if, indeed, there were any chance of proceeding straight to Bethel without danger of having our necks broken."

We hesitated. What the consul urged had much weight with us. "But no," we exclaimed, "were there no practicable way, then the rascals should have said as much at Jerusalem, before they made their bargain with us. Forward, then; the Bedouïns will not be long in following us when they see their tricks and stories failing."

And so, in fact, it was. To this moment I cannot find any key to the enigma of the motives that could have made them so obstinate in refusing to take us by the way we wanted, for neither steep mountain-tracks, nor hostile attacks, nor yet the moderate distance of only five hours' ride, presented any hindrances to our progress. At the suggestion of Shech Hammed, who, when he saw us so positively determined, begged that our luggage at least might take the road round by er-Rameh, we agreed to this being done; but even this was quite unnecessary. Should you ever happen to

travel in these lands, you may, without any uneasiness, take your mules from Jericho to Bethel.

At the same time, it was with a feeling of great disappointment that I left Elisha's fountain, both on account of its thick dark woods, the most romantic forest scenery I have yet seen in Palestine, and on account of the splendid gush of water, and the brook that it sends forth through the plain; not forgetting the important ruins, too, which lie partly sunk in the sand. It has been observed before by other travellers that Jericho must have stood here, and not where now, half an hour farther to the south-east, the hamlet er-Riha is; it is likely that excavations at that place would bring important relics to light. But travellers in passing or visiting the spot are generally in a hurry. Enough strikes the eye to convince them that extensive ruins lie buried under the heaps of rubbish and sand, but there is neither time nor opportunity to explore them. It was so with myself. Indeed, my disappointment was great at our servants having pitched our tents on the dung-heap at the side of the tower of er-Riha, instead of choosing this charming and interesting place.

The site of Ai, which we were in search of on our way from Jericho to Bethel, we seem to have found. The Scriptures indicate the spot with sufficient clearness to prevent one overlooking it when following the track along which it must have stood. Mr Finn had some time ago made an excursion from Bethel to the village of Deir-Diwân, or Dubboan, lying a full hour east-south-east of it, and had found on the way, at thirty-five minutes' distance from Bethel, an isolated Tell, called

by the natives Tell-el-hajar, that is, "the Mount of Stones." This Tell, he thought, answered exactly to the scriptural requirements for Ai; still, in order to make himself sure of the matter, he had first to go up to Bethel from the other side, that is, coming from Jericho, as possibly ruins, or some other indications of an ancient city, were to be found to the east of Deir-Dubboan, that might correspond still better than Tell-el-hajar with the topography of Ai as we find it in Holy Writ. From the southern foot of the Quarantania mount, which rises immediately behind Elisha's fountain,—the mountain, according to tradition, on which the Lord Jesus stood, when having fasted forty days He was tempted of the devil; the mountain, too, by which we this morning began our ascent,—until we came to Deir-Dubboan, we met with no ruins, except the rubbish and old foundations of a village, half an hour before reaching Deir-Dubboan. The natives call this place Abou-Sebâh. What ancient town it indicates I cannot discover; this much, however, is certain, that it has nothing in common with Ai. Deir-Dubboan itself is a thriving village of modern date. Neither can this be Ai; and still less is Ai to be identified with some ruins found by Dr Robinson a quarter of an hour to the south of Deir-Dubboan, these not being east, but south-south-east of Bethel. Dr Krafft has thought he had discovered Ai in a ruin called Medinet Chai to the east of Jeba; Dr Robinson has demonstrated in his *Bibl. Sacra** that that traveller was mistaken. Tell-el-hajar also was visited by the American traveller; but as he saw nothing in the Tell but a huge heap of stones and

* Vol. v. No. xvii. 1848, p. 93.

the remains of an old cistern, it seems never to have struck him that Ai could have been there. He calls the hill simply et-Tell. The old cistern meanwhile suffices to indicate the site of an ancient town; nor did I perceive any other vestiges but the huge heaps of stones, now for the most part piled up into walls, in order to make way for the plough, which the Arab moves so readily among old ruins, to prove that the Tell has been inhabited even later than the days of the old cistern. Now, on turning up the Scriptures, I find that Ai, though a strongly-situated fortress, was small, and its inhabitants few (Joshua vii. 3). The three thousand that went up against Ai fled, notwithstanding, before the face of it, and were slain in the going down of the mountains unto Shebarim. Can the ruins Abou-Sebâh have anything in common with Shebarim? This I throw out as a question.

The second attack upon Ai, speaks of an ambush that lay between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai. Bethel, though lying quite near, in the direction of west by north, cannot be seen from Tell-el-hajar; two rocky heights rise between both places, just as the laying of an ambush to the west of Ai would require. On one of these two heights, then, must Abraham have pitched his tent, when he had left Shechem, and journeyed southward, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east, and "there builded he an altar unto the Lord" (Gen. xii. 8). On his return from the south, he a second time pitched his tent, and called on the name of the Lord at "the place of the altar which he had made there at the first, between Bethel and Hai" (Gen. xiii. 3, 4). Here it was, too, that a contention rose between

the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, and that Lot, in consequence of it, went off to the luxuriant and inviting plain of the Jordan. As to Joshua, he went up with the army while the ambush watched for his signals. "They drew nigh and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now there was a valley between them and Ai."—"And Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley" (Joshua viii. 11–13). The deep and steep-sided glen to the north of Tell-el-hajar, into which one looks down from the Tell, fully agrees with this account. Further, the King of Ai sees his enemies on the other side of, and down below in the valley. He hastily marches out in the dawn of the morning, once more to fall upon them and crush them. A pretended flight in the direction of the wilderness (that is, to the south-east), allures all the inhabitants of Ai out of the city; whilst those of Bethel, who see the flight of the Israelites, but not the ambush that threatens them, eagerly hasten to share in the victory. Now Joshua gives the signal: "he stretched out the spear in his hand toward Ai." The ambush make a sudden rush, and the deserted city a few moments after is in flames. The men see this but too late. They have no power to flee this way or that way, for the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon their pursuers; the ambush issued out from the city into the valley, and fell upon them from behind; all were slain with the edge of the sword, even the women and children in the city, to the number of 12,000 souls. "Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai."—

"And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it *an heap for ever*, a desolation unto this day." One of the remarkable things with regard to the Tell we have identified with Ai is its name, the "*Tell of the heap of stones*," a name which to this day remains, though the city of Ai was rebuilt, and even existed after the Babylonish captivity.

If I give you no more particulars about the road between Jericho and Ai, you must excuse me on account of the lateness of the hour. I trust to have hereafter an opportunity, with the aid of the map which I am now preparing, of communicating to you whatever information I now must withhold with respect to this and other districts of the country. Too much topography in my letters would soon grow tiresome. So, my friend, good night! You shall have more to-morrow.

6th May.

Although among these stones I have not been like Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 11-19) privileged with a dream such as might lead me to say: "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven," yet I have had a sweet and refreshing sleep. The delightfully fresh mountain air has given me new vigour, and with thankfulness for these blessings, I shall ere long resume my daily work. My friends, too, in their tents beside me, have got up; the fires are kindled; breakfast will soon be ready, and our horses and mules foddered. While the tents are being struck, I will write you a few lines more from this place.

Bethel is at present represented by a hamlet called Beit-în. It is not yet twenty years since people began

to identify it with the ancient Bethel. The latter had fallen quite into oblivion. Its ruins cover a large extent of ground, so that one might almost think that Bethel in later times had started up now to the left hand, and, now again, somewhat more to the right. The foundations of houses, loose building stones, and fragments of walls, are to be seen in abundance; the traces also of Christian churches. Among things worth notice, there is a large quadrangular tank, the two feeders of which are still remaining, but which, for the rest, is half in ruins. A quarter of an hour east-north-east of the village stand the ruins of a castle and the remains of a church. On some of the fallen stones and columns of this ruin I noticed sculptured rosettes and Maltese crosses.

As I was yesterday measuring angles from a rising ground that stands due west from the castle ruins, a few yards from the spot where our tents had been pitched, I caught a sight of Jerusalem, and was thus reminded of the sin of Jeroboam. That the revolted king set up two golden calves in Bethel and in Dan, to which he made offerings and burnt incense, none can regard as a small sin (1 Kings xii. 29–33, and xiii. 1–34); but what made that sin especially heinous was, that the idolatrous altar was erected within sight of Jerusalem. All the people, accordingly, that came to offer incense on that altar, saw in the distance the house where they knew that the glory of the Lord dwelt. Jeroboam, though warned of God by the drying up of the hand that was put forth against the prophet that rebuked him, and again by that hand being restored, nevertheless turned not from his evil

way. Therefore is he, through the whole succession of the kings of Israel, held out as an example of sin; and we are informed of their evil ways by the expression, "They walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin" (1 Kings xv. 34; 2 Kings xxiii. 15, &c.) Israel that forsook the Lord openly at Bethel received the reward of its sin; so that even the shame of Moab's confidence in her idols is likened by Jeremiah to the shame of Israel's confidence in the idol of Bethel (Jer. xlviii. 13). Amos reproaches Israel for her idolatry in strong language (Amos iv. 4, 5); and foretells the lot that was to befall the wicked city (Amos v. 5; see also Hos. v. 8, and x. 8.) How fearfully has the spot been desecrated where once stood the ladder by which the angels of God ascended and descended! Oh, everlasting compassion! Oh, unutterable love, which has given in "the Son of man" another imperishable ladder, along which God's angels fulfil God's will from heaven to men (John i. 52), not only for Bethel and for Israel, but for "all the ends of the earth."

SHECHEM, *7th May.*

Safe and sound, but hot and tired, we reached this yesterday evening. Our friendly fellow-traveller from Jericho to Bethel, Mr Finn, to whom unquestionably belongs the honour of the discovery of Ai, left us to go from the rocky heights of Bethel to visit Rimmûn, lying to the north-east of these, and thence to return to Jerusalem. This is the very Rimmon of Judges xx. 47, and xxi. 13, towards which the six hundred men of Benjamin fled who were left after the frightful

vengeance executed on the children of Belial at Gibeah. Mr Finn has promised to communicate to me the results of his researches. We followed the highway to Nablous. This road has been so often described by others, that you will not expect me to say much about it. You are aware that the bare rocky mountains of Judea, the further one goes to the north, become always more and more cultivated. Properly speaking, they are no longer the mountains of Judea, but of Ephraim. The villages on the road seem to be thriving; the first three, after leaving Bethel, lie on the left hand among olive-gardens on their heights; but the hill-slopes immediately on the right hand, too, are planted out with figs, olives, and mulberries, in regular gardens, enclosed with substantial walls. My English friends, who as yet had seen nothing green in Palestine but the vale of Hebron and the gardens in the valley of Jehoshaphat, were surprised and charmed with the beauty of the landscape. As respects myself, I was no less delighted to escape from the bare gray rocks, and to return to a more verdant district. What our good German divine thought, I know not; for he kept always in the rear, gathering flowers and pressing them flat between a couple of books which he had in his saddle-bags on his horse. "My dear friend," I ventured once or twice to say by way of a hint, "we are here on a bad road, notorious for the plundering and mischievous propensities of the inhabitants; in separating yourself from our train you run a chance of being fallen upon, as many travellers have ere now found to their cost." But it was in vain to speak to him. The wild roses, the thyme, the honeysuckles, and

a multitude of other flowers and plants, were too strong a temptation for him. All thoughts of being plundered were lost in the enjoyment of their fragrance and beauty. Happily we met with none of those adventures which have given the name of 'Ain-Haramieh, that is, "Fountain of the thieves," to a fountain two hours to the north of Bethel. We passed through the narrow valley of that fountain without being molested, and without stopping at its old dried-up pond, for the spring water which seemed once to have filled the tank was muddy and uninviting. Shortly after I met one or two natives, of whom I inquired the way to Shiloh, as I had with my friend H. ridden up a path running along the right hand acclivity that seemed to be parallel with the lower road in the valley, but which imperceptibly went off always more and more towards the right, while we were prevented by the olive-trees from seeing how it went. Shiloh is by the Arabs called Seilûn, or Seiloun. Unluckily I pronounced the word improperly, calling it Seiloan, which is quite a different place, being a village to the north-east of Ain-Haramieh, in the hills, and the way we were now following, apart from the rest of the company, was just the path to that Seiloan.* The consequence was, that the people we passed answered us with a confirmatory "Nahm," while we were deviating more and more from the right course. It then struck me that we were going too much towards the east, and upon further inquiry at other persons passing us, I discovered that we were on the road to Seiloan instead of Seiloun. A path which we made for ourselves down through the olive-trees

* Properly, Seiload.

soon brought us back to our caravan, which meanwhile had been assailed with stones thrown by some mischievous shepherd boys from the heights. You may well conceive what a lesson was read me by my theological friend for having wandered away myself, after having warned him of the danger of doing so. The insolence of the shepherds had not the less shown him what was the disposition of the people of this neighbourhood.

Wilson has remarked that Dr Robinson's map places Shiloh too far to the north, and his remark is correct. Shiloh lies an hour and a quarter, or four miles, beyond 'Ain-Haramieh, and about three hours and three quarters, or about eleven miles, from Bethel. It is nothing more than a heap of fallen houses on a knoll rising at the north-east extremity of a plain which is half an hour in diameter. At the south end of this plain stands the village of Turmûs-Aja. At the foot of the Shiloh hill stands, at the side of a building which the Moslems seem to have turned into a mosque, a fine old oak, of the kind called Sindiân, with bunchy branches and small prickly leaves. Beneath its shadow we sheltered ourselves from the heat during the time of our brief mid-day halt.

And is this all that remains of Shiloh? You may well ask that. It is all except the ruins of a church that lie on a separate eminence opposite the hill of Shiloh, and which is called by the inhabitants "the Mosque of the Sixty." Wilson considered it to be a building of great antiquity. The walls on the Shiloh hill are themselves the relics of a village of comparatively modern date; but the huge stones and pillar shafts of

the olden time may still be seen here and there, used as building materials among the stones of more recent days.

While one of our people went to fetch water from the spring a quarter of an hour to the east of Shiloh, in a valley, I climbed to the top of the hill on which the ruins stood, to take angles. But I had little return for my pains; three or four villages were all I could perceive, rising on their heights above the other surrounding mountains, viz., er-Ras, Kurriût, Zawieh, and Abû-Lehauf. The hills around Jerusalem were still visible in their purple-tinted shadows.

Our German friend, meanwhile, had gathered an ample treasure for his collection of dried flowers; and I must acknowledge that the variety and beauty of flowers was here so great, that we were all surprised into a passion for following our friend's example, and augmenting the collections which we had already received as keepsakes from our friends at Jerusalem, with the addition of memorials of other parts of Palestine.

The ruins of Shiloh made a sad impression on me. And how could it be otherwise, in the remembrance that this was the once highly privileged place where the Ark of God rested under the tabernacle after the land of Caanan had been brought into subjection to the children of Israel. At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, Eleazar the priest, and Joshua, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes divided to each tribe its inheritance by lot.* Shiloh was the spiritual metropolis of the kingdom. Thither Israel went up to pray and offer sacrifices; there was the

* Joshua xviii. 1; xix. 51; xxi. 2; xxii. 9.

great feast of the Lord held from year to year;* there Hannah poured out her soul before the Lord, and Israel's God granted her petition;† there she came again to Eli, and said, "O my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord; he has been obtained by petition to the Lord;" ‡ there the Lord appeared to the young Samuel and revealed to him His Word.

The Ark of the Covenant once left the door of the tent, and with it, "the Lord forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men; and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand. He gave His people over, also, unto the sword; and was wroth with His inheritance." He again had mercy, "but refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim." § Ah, Shiloh! Shiloh! thou, too, like the son of Phinehas, hast become Ichabod (The glory is departed). Ah! it is an awful thing to be rejected by God! "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh," so the Lord warns his people in aftertimes, "where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel." ‖ O that Shiloh's example were always before our mind!

While travelling from Shiloh to the north, a considerable descent in the ground is perceptible. It is

* Judges xxi. 19. † 1 Sam. i. 15, 20. ‡ 1 Sam. i. 26–28.
§ Psalm lxxviii. 59-61, 67; 1 Sam. iv.
‖ Jeremiah vii. 12, 14; also xxvi. 6.

clear that the undulating mountain ridge which, ever from the south, has continued with a variation of heights and valleys, past Hebron, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Bethel, now, as we are beyond Shiloh, goes down to a much lower level; not suddenly, but gradually as we follow the valley where Libân (Lebona, Judges xxi. 19) and Zawiëh, both are situated upon high hills to our left. Two hours' journey to the north of Shiloh, we have one more elevation to cross. As soon as we have reached the top, the valley of El-Mokhna (see vol. i. page 411) presents itself in its full length, with its hills and villages to the right and left, its cultivated fields, and yonder in the north, at about two hours' distance, Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, which tower in all their majesty above the surrounding heights. As soon as we descend into the valley, there is a path leading to Hawarah, lying at the foot of the mountains, where the road unites with the path which, two months ago, I followed on going down from Shechem to Jaffa. As seen from this side, Gerizim covers Mount Ebal entirely. But at last you approach the opening of the Shechem valley, and the gray rocks of Ebal now begin to appear to the right of Gerizim, which, from this side, shews more verdure than the former.

"How effectual is the curse of God!" said my German friend—"look how barren Mount Ebal is, and how lovely Mount Gerizim!"

"But, my dear friend," said I, "though Ebal was the mountain upon which the curse of God was to be pronounced over the people,* this does not imply that the mountain should be accursed. What connec-

* Deut. xi. 26–30; xxvii.; Joshua viii. 30, 34.

tion should there be between the pronouncing of God's curse or blessing, and the physical appearance of these mountains?"

My good fellow-traveller shook his head as if he pitied my sceptical blindness. When, a few minutes later, we were seated in our tent under the shadow of the olive-trees on the west side of the town, resting ourselves after the fatigues of the day, I asked him;—

"Now, my dear Herr Pastor, what is your opinion with regard to Ebal and Gerizim?"

"Oh, to be sure," said he, "from this place I can see no difference between the mountains; each of them is a gigantic mass of rocks; the one is covered with cactus gardens, the other is planted with olive-trees, and as to my opinion regarding the blessing and the curse, I must abandon it. But let us make haste that we may ascend Gerizim before sunset." I had not a little difficulty in explaining to him the impossibility of ascending the mountain in five minutes' time, and of his danger in losing his way were he to venture upon it without a guide. The inhabitants of Jebel Nablous, besides, are in too bad repute to venture on such an expedition in the evening quite alone. But my good friend did not understand this. He felt vexed, as he had imagined he might wander over the mountains of Palestine as over those of his own country. To meet with such a number of hindrances, not to be allowed to remain behind the caravan when he felt anxious to gather flowers, not to be allowed to wander over the mountains in solitary meditation; and, moreover, to find little or no sympathy when he spoke about his "unutterable feelings" in the Church

of the Holy Sepulchre, or about the curse that hung over Mount Ebal—this was too bad.

"Why," said he, "I cannot travel with you in this manner. You may go where you like, but to-morrow I intend to proceed as pleases myself."

"I am sorry, my dear sir, that my mode of travelling does not please you; but I would not interfere with your choice. Yet I pray you to consider what you are about. If you will brave things that cannot be avoided, you run a danger of losing your life. Without a servant, without a dragoman, and without the necessary conveniences to wander about in Palestine, this you cannot long continue to do."

But it was all of no use. My good German thought that others had travelled through the Holy Land in that manner, and he might do it as well as they. What would have become of him without the assistance of my English friends, I do not know; but they had pity on him, and at last succeeded, after much talking, in persuading him to journey under their protection to the convent of Mount Carmel. Probably it would be less difficult from thence to find an opportunity to travel to Beirût, the last station of his tour through the Holy Land. And, indeed, it is well that our theologist, however amiable his character, and however pleasant his company, follows his own way; for the route which I intend to follow to-morrow morning down to the valley of the Jordan, seems to me to involve so many difficulties, that I doubt very much whether he would have been able to find his way through them. A journey in Palestine with the view merely to feast upon religious meditations, and a sur-

veying tour in the unfrequented regions of Palestine, are two different things.

Meanwhile, Shechem this time has still more charms for me than it had two months ago. Then it was winter, and only the olive and orange-trees were clad in green; now, all the trees of the valley, whether apricots or mulberries, pomegranates or vines, figs or walnuts, shewed themselves in the fulness of their splendour. Shechem now lies embosomed in a forest of fruit-gardens. As far as nature goes, one might almost call it a little paradise. And if you wish rightly to appreciate its value, there is nothing like a previous hard day's journey over the barren hills or through the scorching valleys of this country. Imagine to yourself the impression the vale of Shechem, in this season of the year, must make upon the weary traveller. Tired and panting, he approaches by the unshadowed base of Gerizim, from the side of the Mokhna plain; his eyes are almost blinded by the fierce rays of the sun, and his face is red and swollen from the scorching heat. His path winds over the lower shoulder of the *Mountain of Blessing*. Jacob's well is pointed out to him at a little distance below; but as his expectation of the well is so very different from the reality, he stares without discovering anything; it never enters into his mind that a small hole among yonder stones, scarcely perceptible from here, is the famous spot. But never mind, we shall have another opportunity of visiting the well, as also the white-plastered tomb of Joseph in its immediate vicinity. Let us not detain ourselves now. Here we get round the mountain, and our eye rests at once upon a carpet of the most lovely green,

whilst the shadow of Mount Gerizim increases the depths of its tints. What a charming valley! What a lovely view! What a splendid situation has this town! We ride along its northern wall, and coming on the west side of the town, we find ourselves in the most delicious part of the gardens. What a splendour has nature bestowed upon this spot! What lovely melodies from between the branches rejoice the heart! What a rushing of waters from numberless rivulets! What a delightfully cool atmosphere in this shade! It seems impossible that this can be the same land. In the midst of these gardens travellers often pitch their tents. We, too, expected to find there a place; but, besides there being already several companies encamped, our guide frightened us by saying that the place swarmed with mosquitoes, which always prefer water and shade. We, therefore, chose a more elevated plot of ground, where we had not so much foliage, but were free from these insects. And even here we are not alone; there are three more tents pitched near us.

Our day has not been lost. Last night I hastened to send for Auwdi-es-Sam, one of the Protestants* of Nablous, whom I had met at Bishop Gobat's at Jerusalem, and who had offered me his services should

* The information we have received of this first planting of Evangelical Christianity in Nablous is highly gratifying. In the *Record* of 5th January 1854, occurs a letter of Bishop Gobat, mentioning that there is now a Protestant school in Nablous, where no less than 38 children receive instruction. Of these, six are Mohammedans. The Protestants are increasing; many of them, perhaps all, are yet weak in faith and love, and have to suffer great persecution from the Greek Church; but, nevertheless, light begins to dawn. The Bishop has appointed an evangelist in this place.

I have occasion to pass by Shechem again. Auwdi is secretary to the Metzellim at Nablous. His assistance, therefore, in getting the necessary guides for my further explorations was very valuable to me. In es-Salt, on the east side of the Jordan, there is now a small Protestant community in course of formation; and I was in hopes that this would lead me into the way of getting assistance to make a tour thither. But Auwdi explained to me that the difficulty would be too great. I have, therefore, given up this idea, and shall now satisfy myself with remaining on the west side of the Jordan. I went with Auwdi this morning to the Metzellim, Machmoud-Beg, and shewed him my firman, and also a letter of introduction from Mr Finn of Jerusalem. The reception was very civil, and characterised by much more decorum than I had yet experienced in any other part of this land. The object of our visit touched as well my friends as myself. They wanted a chayal to accompany and protect them the following morning to Samaria; I needed an armed guide, and a written order to all the shechs of the country between Nablous and the Jordan. As to the latter there was much difficulty; the old Metzellim endeavoured in every way to deter me from this purpose. Not until he saw that I began to press the matter more, and claimed a fuller obedience to the firman, did he promise to have somebody sought out who was well acquainted with this district, and under whose guidance I might safely set out. But as such a person was not to be found in Nablous, we had to exercise patience until he should be found in one of the neighbouring villages.

The Metzellim offered his janissaries to guard our tent, or to protect us when walking in and around the town; but we civilly declined this, as such a protection, if not absolutely necessary, is rather annoying and expensive. In this land, eagerness after money is so great, that the annoyance of giving baksheesh is never at an end. Thus, for instance, when we left the Metzellim, Auwdi whispered to me that it was customary to give baksheesh to the servants who had brought us pipes and coffee. I took the liberty of not complying with this habit, as my visit was not one of state, and as I, moreover, have not done anything of the kind in one of the other serais of Palestine. I thought it would be better not to accustom these petty metzellims to such things, and if Machmoud-Beg had already been spoiled, to check, at any rate for this time, his tendency. A baksheesh was also claimed by the High-priest of the Samaritans, whom we visited, both to see him and his synagogue. He was even free enough to tell us that twenty piastres per head was the baksheesh travellers always gave him, and which even Mr Finn, the British consul, whom he called his particular friend, never refused. It seems to me that this people must have been wonderfully successful in extorting baksheesh from travellers, else they would never have become so impudent. But it is now too late, and it will be no easy matter to turn the stream. The pride of travellers is gratified by displaying their generosity in the form of such presents. The Samaritans seem to know this weak point of their visitors very well, and they cleverly turn it to their own advantage. Of the synagogue, a small empty room covered with a mat,

and at night lighted with two or three small lamps; of the old parchments which are kept there; of the famous copy of the Pentateuch, which the Samaritans pretend was written by Abishua, the son of Phinehas—a manuscript roll, beautifully written, and remarkably well preserved, covered with red satin, upon which golden letters are embroidered, enclosed in a cylinder of brass, whilst another cover of green satin, likewise ornamented with golden letters, is wrapped around it; of the doctrines, manners, and customs of the Samaritans; of their ceremonies upon Mount Gerizim; of the venerable appearance of the old High-priest; and of whatever else belongs to this peculiar people, Wilson gives us such a full account, that there remains nothing for me to say. From the synagogue of the Samaritans we went to see Jacob's well and Joseph's tomb. Notwithstanding the description I had given my friends of Jacob's well, the reality disappointed them much. So strong is our imagination, that what it once has conceived, no descriptions, but only experience, can eradicate. We found at the well two English travellers just arrived from Jerusalem, and also much disappointed. They could scarcely believe it to be the well of Jacob.

I took my instrument to the top of Gerizim, but it was to no purpose. The sky was filled with the vapours of the sirocco, and whenever this is the case, the atmosphere is so thick that distant objects become quite invisible. The Rev. Mr Wolcott was more fortunate when, a few years ago, he measured angles from this mountain, and his communications in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* must now atone for my defici-

ency in this respect. So it often happens that I must fill up the blanks in my own observations with those of others. When the sky is clear the views from Mount Gerizim must well repay the trouble of the ascent. On the north side, however, the prospect is intercepted by Mount Ebal, which rises still higher than Gerizim. Two points on the latter, by their prominence, are especially favourable for enjoying a fine view—the Moslem weli upon the corner of the old foundation of the Samaritan temple, which you know stood on the north-east side of the mountain top, and a kind of knoll which rises more to the north, and forms the highest point of Gerizim. The mountain, according to Von Wildenbruch, is 2361 Parisian feet high; its elevation above Shechem, however, is only 793 feet. It is the highest elevation of a mountain range, the branches of which spread far to the west and south-west. Ebal, too, is united with a long ridge of lower western neighbours. Thus neither of these two mountains is to be considered as an isolated cone; Gerizim, however, expands the widest of the two, and even its very top is a broad table-land by itself. It is sown with grain, whilst the slopes of the mountain are laid out in terraces for the cultivation of olive-trees. How do I regret the sirocco, as it renders an ascent of Mount Ebal perfectly fruitless! We remained for a long while on the cool mountain top. A Samaritan youth was our guide, and directed us to whatever was remarkable; among other things, to the ruins of the temple, and those of an ancient building which goes by the name of El-Kâlat (the castle), of which you may find descriptions in several books; also to the

remains of the Pascal lambs which, only eight days before, had been sacrificed. They were burned in little hollows in the ground, and their calcined bones were yet distinguishable among the ashes.

This was the end of our day's work. When returned to our tents, every one of us had some business to attend to. Our journals had to be filled up, arrangements had to be made for our departure to-morrow morning, flowers were to be preserved as memorials of Shechem, and to me belonged the especial task of writing these lines to you. I am sure you will now deem it right that I should lay down the pen, in order that I may devote the last hours of this evening to my friends, who will part from me to-morrow. I must ask you this time to examine for yourself all the incidents of Scripture which relate to Shechem.* If my short description of the vale of Shechem, with its mountains of Blessing and Curse, and with its town inhabited by ten thousand souls (the most of these are Mohammedans), can in any way elucidate to you the narratives of Scripture, I shall be very glad. I hope my sketch will come in aid of my pen.

AKRABEH, *8th May.*

It was with much regret that I witnessed the departure of my friends, with whom I had been permitted to spend a few days in so much unity of spirit, unity of faith, hope, and love, and that in some of the most interesting places of the globe. At this hour I trust

* Genesis xii. 6; xxxiii. 18–20; xxxiv.; xxxv. 2–4; Josh. xx. 7; xxi. 21; xxiv. 1, 25, 32; Judges ix., etc. See also vol. i. pp. 387–409.

they have, like me, accomplished their day's journey, and are now enjoying rest somewhere in one of the villages of the plain of Sharon. My own tent is now pitched until Monday morning (the day after to-morrow), in the rarely or never visited mountains east of Shechem.

One hour elapsed after another, but the promised guide did not appear. I sent Philip once more to the Metzellim to inquire how matters stood. At last, at about half-past ten, a gigantic ruffian came to me, with the most villanous-looking face I ever saw. The fellow produced on me a very disagreeable impression. He, thought I, what should he know about the land, or its ruins and sites? Was I to entrust myself to his guidance? For a moment I hesitated. But I remembered the protection and keeping of God on my journey to the Dead Sea. "Come on," said I, to my attendants. "Jallah!" they repeated, and we took the way round the town towards the plain of El-Mokhna, the robber-looking fellow riding in front, armed as he was with pistols, sword, and gun. To be sure, thought I, he comes from the Metzellim, as two janissaries have brought him to my tent. Perhaps, after all, he may answer my purpose very well.

But still I could not conquer my repugnance to the fellow. We had scarcely journeyed half an hour before his true character appeared. A child was playing by the wayside with a large stick—he wrung the stick out of its hand, whilst it ran off crying bitterly; a little further, we met a young man whose tobacco-bag he took from him. I could not bear such tyranny, and

yet to begin to quarrel with him at the outset of a difficult expedition which would last for several days, would not do either.

"Chayal," I said to him, "let us go back to Shechem."

He looked surprised at me, and asked, "Back! why?"

At that very moment, two men on horseback arrived from Shechem at their utmost speed, making all further explanation unnecessary. The one was a messenger from the Metzellim with a letter to me, the other was a shech, the old Daoud of Beit-fûrîk, whom the Metzellim had sent to me as a proper guide for my journey. The letter declared the fierce-looking chayal to have usurped his place, as it was without the knowledge of the Governor that the two janissaries had brought him to me. The messenger had in charge to conduct him back immediately to his master. The smothered rage on the face of the ruffian formed one of the most striking expressions I have ever seen the human face assume. Matters, however, were soon arranged. I did not stop for five minutes, but hastened away with the peaceful-looking shech Daoud, thanking God for having thus saved me from the clutches of this villain.

When we had passed the parcel of land which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor for an hundred pieces of money,* we turned south-east in a rocky valley called Wadi-Gawareh. A new mountain ridge here begins; it is less elevated than the mountains of Shechem and Samaria, but forms, nevertheless, the promi-

* Gen. xxxiii. 19.

nent feature in this district. Immediately before us we had a mountain with three broad summits; its horse-shoe shaped base opens to the west; it is called Jebel-Mzérah (as Daoud told me), after a small ruin which is found near to the highest of the three tops. Having left our wadi, we now rode along the foot of Jebel-Mzérah to Beit-fûrîk, which is six miles distant from Shechem. This village is, as its large ancient building stones indicate, an old site; but I am unable to tell of what. By its elevated position, Beit-fûrîk enjoys a fine and extensive view of the Shechem mountains and the Mokhna plain. The villages of Salim, ed-Deir, Asmûd, Talûsa, and Jazîd, are all visible. Towards the east, however, the view is intercepted by Jebel-Mzérah.

Daoud requested me, as the Metzellim of Nablous had ordered him off so suddenly, to allow him half an hour to say good-bye to his wife and children, and to procure a few things he would require on the road. He is one of the principal men of his village. He was kind enough to offer me coffee, while I stood taking measurements under the olive-trees near the village. At last Daoud was ready; his half had grown to a whole hour. The Arabs never think of making haste, except when, in our company, we meet with things indifferent to them, but sufficiently interesting to make us desire to stop. Being thankful, however, that all things had turned out so well, I had no difficulty at this time in exercising patience.

I am not now going to tell you all the particulars of our road, every turn, every ascent or descent we passed, as you will understand all about this from my map.

So I take you along with me with accelerated paces over a high mountain, a northern continuation of the Jebel-Mzérah, where I found a favourable point for taking angles, as it presented to the right and left, or, to speak more properly, to the east and west, fine prospects—to the east, the picturesque valley of the Jordan (the Ghor), and to the west, the mountains of Shechem and Samaria. Amongst others, I noticed from this spot in a westerly direction, at about an hour's distance, a hill top on which are situated the ruins of El-'Arma, in which I believe I may recognise the Arumah of Judges ix. 41, where Abimelech remained after he had struck Gaāl the first blow, and before he destroyed Shechem altogether.

I now invite you to follow me, as we go down southward in a valley, where we see a few cultivated fields; but still more waste ground where we ride through thistles of such a height that their large violet flowers rise more than a foot above our heads, seated on our horses. After a ride of fifty minutes, we come to another Biblical site, the ancient Janohah,* whence the border of the children of Ephraim went down to "Ataroth, and to Naarath."† The valley which we see in descending to the Jordan, explains the expression of Scripture, "went down." Janohah in Arabic is called Janûn. Eusebius and Jerome place it exactly where it lies—twelve Roman miles to the east of Shechem, in the province of Akrabatene. It is now a miserable hamlet, but its ancient ruins are extensive and interesting. I have not seen any of Israel's ancient cities in such a condition. Entire

* Josh. xvi. 7. † Ibid.

houses and walls are yet existing, but covered with immense heaps of earth and rubbish. The dwellings of the present inhabitants are built upon and between the houses of the ancient Janohah. Janûn presents a chaos of ancient destruction and modern neglect, the like of which I have never seen.

After forty minutes' ride we reach Akrabeh, a pretty large village, the limit of our journey for to-day. As approached from Janûn it is hidden by projecting hill-slopes, until we are within a quarter of an hour's distance. It then appears lying on the north side of the broad valley of Makhfûriëh, a position which is mentioned in the book of Judith, chapter vii. verse 18, as "Ekrebet on the brook Momur." Akrabeh is the ancient Akrabatene, the capital of the district of that name. A few smaller places, now indicated by the ruins of Kefil or Kifl, Jurîsh, and Erfai, the latter opposite Akrabeh, near to the Moslem weli, Abû Charîb, have surrounded this city.

Akrabeh belongs to those places where at present a traveller seldom or never passes; except Messrs Schultz and Barth, I have not heard of any one else having visited the place for a number of years. You may, therefore, imagine with what surprise the Moslem inhabitants stared at us. Shech Daoud, however, was well known among them, and this procured me at once a kind reception. We rode through the village, passed the remains of a large but now ruined reservoir, and pitched our tent upon a grassy slope, near the ruins of the castle, which was built upon a kind of terrace, in order the better to protect the town. This, then, is my resting-place for the Sunday (to-

morrow). Should no unexpected hindrances prevent me, my purpose is, on Monday morning at early dawn, to descend to the Ghor. When I return I shall write you fully.

SHECHEM, 12*th May*.

How! again in Shechem? Yes, my friend, once more in Shechem; true, it is *nolens volens*, but I doubt not that everything is ordered for the best by a mighty Hand.

My Sunday at Akrabeh was quiet enough: but still it was one of the most oppressive days I have experienced during my whole journey.

When the sun rose, the atmosphere was filled with a peculiar ash-coloured vapour, always produced by the sirocco, and causing that oppressive heat of which I have more than once told you. Soon the temperature in my tent became insufferable. Outside, in the scorching rays of the sun, it was worse. There was something suffocating in the air, which made it extremely difficult to breathe, and which seemed to quench every energy. I cannot compare this feeling with anything we ever experience in our northern lands. I took refuge under the shadow of an olive garden, a little higher up the mountain, but even then I could only escape from the rays of the sun, not from the suffocating sirocco. I sat down under a tree, but felt quite powerless. The best way I found was to lie flat on the furrows of the newly ploughed ground. There I remained for the greater part of the day, panting for air, and yet not finding the air my lungs required. It was a day of much suffering, for the

sirocco, besides all its other effects, has this, that it depresses the mind with a feeling of complete exhaustion. My body glowing from internal and external oppressive heat, my mind dejected and deprived of all energy; this was the condition in which I spent that whole day.

Even the inhabitants of Akrabeh, excited as their curiosity was, were kept in-doors by the sirocco. No visitors to my tent appeared. Only in the evening, when the air became a little cooler, they came with slow steps to have a chat; pipes and coffee as usual went round, but the influence of the oppressive state of the atmosphere could not thereby be overcome.

Yet I had to face the difficulties. My time was short; to wait until the sirocco was past would have caused me to lose too much time. So we rose very early, and before the dawn of day were on our way to the Ghor. At first the morning was somewhat more tolerable; but no sooner had the blood-red disc of the sun appeared from behind the mountains of Gilead, than the atmosphere seemed to be set on fire. And if it was thus in these mountains, what would it be down below in the Ghor, where always, even during the winter season, a tropical temperature reigns, caused by its deep sunken position?

But on we went, right against the fiery glow of the Ghor!

And it was not in passive indifference that we advanced. No; watch, pocket-compass and note-book were interchanging one another continually in my hand to-day as on every other day, or in fact even more, as it was all *terra incognita* I traversed.

The first place where we stopped was the village of Medjdel, an old, miserable cluster of houses, but with a few tobacco-gardens and olive-trees, at rather more than an hour's distance south-east of Akrabeh. A small *tell*, covered with ruins, call Merash-ed-Dîn, lay near Medjdel on our way. Whilst now and then I looked back to Akrabeh, which at Medjdel is out of sight, I got a clear idea of the situation of the capital of Akrabatene, with regard to Beit-fûrîk. These two places lie about south-east and north-west from each other, and leaving out of consideration the intervening mountain, there would be about an hour's distance between them. The ruin of El-'Arma lies between these two villages, on the western slope of the mountain.

Medjdel is the Arabic form of the Hebrew Migdal. I do not know, however, of a Migdal which Scripture points to in this district. But the large old hewn stones prove sufficiently that here was once an ancient site. It is the last village which, in going from west to east, one meets with in these mountains, as the valleys descend precipitously to the Ghor from this place. The prospect of the Ghor from Medjdel is truly magnificent. A very prominent point in it is the high conical Mount Surtabet, which rises in the centre of the Ghor, and which in a straight line would be about two hours' distance from Medjdel. In my map it is an important point of triangulation. A wadi which runs to the south of Mount Surtabet, called Wadi-Burjeh, has its beginning a quarter of an hour to the south-west of Medjdel. This is one of the principal valleys through which people go down into the Ghor.

We went round the head of this wadi, and reached, an hour after Medjdel, the village of Daumeh, the ancient Eduma or Edumia of Jerome and Josephus.

A solitary ruin to the south-east of the village, at no more than five minutes' distance, drew my attention. So I rode past Daumeh to have a look of it, but found it, on coming nearer, to be only a piece of an ancient wall, around which a few loose stones are scattered. To what building has it belonged? A castle or a temple? I do not know; but its isolated position on a spot which commands a wide view over the Ghor, as well as over the neighbouring south-western tableland, makes me think that here a castle must have stood. Magnificence and strength must have been united here, as is clearly visible from the scattered remains of mosaic pavement.

It was now about half-past eight—a suitable hour for breakfast—whilst Daoud went to get information from the villagers with regard to our further course for this day. I had heard much about a ruin called el-Aujeh, which by some has been identified with the fortress of Archelaüs, built by Herod. The people of Daumeh assured me that el-Aujeh was at least three hours south of their village, in the mountains. So far south I had no mind to go, and, if I am not mistaken, the ruins of Archelaüs must not be sought for in the mountains, but in the Ghor. El-Aujeh, therefore, I gave up, preferring to go down the valley immediately below Daumeh, whither Daoud and a guide from the village accompanied me, whilst my attendants and luggage remained under the immediate care of the shech of the village. A steep and rocky

track of more than a thousand feet descent had we to follow. It took us an hour and twenty minutes. The further we came down, the more a fiery wind from the Ghor met us right in the face. What I suffered when down in the valley from the insupportable heat, I should in vain try to describe to you. Suppose you stood before a glowing fire, and were forced to have your face turned to it for some time in continuance, would not you find this intolerable after a few minutes? Suppose, nevertheless, that it were impossible for you to go back from the glow, cannot you imagine how the sweat would run down your fiery cheeks? At every moment it becomes more intolerable; but still, remove from the spot you cannot. You are, as it were, firmly fixed before the fire! Well, then, such was my feeling when descending into the Ghor. The air itself seemed to be fire. I was obliged, every now and then, to turn my head away from the wind, and to hold my handkerchief before my mouth, that I might not inhale the hot atmosphere, which, nevertheless, had to be inhaled. And nature around me? you perhaps ask.—All was burned. Thistles, grass, flowers, and shrubs grow here with rare luxuriance, but now everything was burned white like hay and straw, and this, perhaps, standing five or six feet high! My guides, as well as myself, thought we should die while descending into this gigantic furnace.

At last we see living green; a thicket of wild fig-trees and oak shrubs mixed and intertwined with oleanders and thorny plants, seems, as it were, to hide itself at the base of the glowing rocks, keeping full vigour of life, notwithstanding the extraordinary heat.

What may be the cause of this? You who are acquainted with the image of him whose trust is in the Lord, from the remarkable phrase, Jeremiah xvii. 7, 8—you will have already guessed it. Yes, it is a fountain of living waters which keeps the leaves of these trees green, whilst everything round about is consumed by drought and heat.

"This is Ain Fasaël" (the fountain of Fasaëlus), said my guide.

Tradition points out the fountain of Fasaëlus as the "brook Cherith that is before Jordan," where Elijah the Tishbite was commanded by the Lord to hide himself. The prophet in those days abode in Samaria, but he would not be safe there during the three years' drought; therefore "the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." *

Dr Robinson thinks the brook Cherith is identical with Wadi-Kelt, the river of Jericho.† But Bachiene, who, with great discernment, has compared the accounts of the ancient authors regarding the brook Cherith,‡ proves, in refutation of the statements of Eusebius and Jerome, that this brook rises near the city of Fasaëlus, which lies in the valley of the Jordan, three

* 1 Kings xvii. 2–4.

† M. de Saulcy, in speaking of the Nahr Kelt, assures us that the difference between the pronunciation of *Kelt* and *Cherith* is so very slight that there would be no difficulty in identifying these two names with each other (!)—See *Journey Round the Dead Sea*, vol. ii. p. 36.

‡ See *Heilige Geographie*, Utrecht, 1758, I^e deel. I^e stuk. pp. 126–130.

miles to the west of the river, the fountain of the brook being at the base of the mountains, and sending its waters to the Jordan. He refers chiefly to Brochardus and M. Sancti. *Secr. Fidel. Cruc.* lib. iii. part xv. cap. 3. And with regard to the expression, *before* Jordan, in 1 Kings xvii. 3, he tells us that it might be rendered with equal accuracy, *on the side.* It seems to me that the command to Elijah, as he was coming from Samaria, was as clear as possible to go to the brook Cherith that is *before* Jordan. In Scripture the *east* is called *before;* according to our manner of speaking, therefore, the words of this verse would be, "Get thee up and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, which is near the Jordan, in going down from hence, eastward." The position of 'Ain Fasaël, with regard to Samaria, is east-south-easterly. If, however, the Wadi-Kelt were to be identified with the brook Cherith, the word of the Lord unto the prophet could not have been, "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward," but "Turn thee to the south, to the brook Cherith, that is on the right hand," as the south is expressed by *to the right.*

Is it not truly an interesting spot, this hiding-place at the foot of the rocks of the Jordan valley, where the prophet was fed by the ravens? It seemed clear to me that this must have really been a hiding-place. Who would ever have come hither to seek for Elijah? And at the same time, here he found shade and foliage, and food and water. What a merciful provision from the hand of God! What a delightful subject to meditate upon:—"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." * How full of encouragement!

* James v. 17.

The fountain of Fasaëlus had now a double attraction for me; first, as the brook Cherith, and also as the place where I found shelter for a short time against the sirocco and the burning rays of the sun. There is a distance of three quarters of an hour between the fountain and the end of the valley in the plain of the Jordan. The rocks on both sides of the valley contain a great many natural caves. In these, so Daoud told me, the Bedouïns dwell during the winter season, in order to find shelter from the rains. The central part of the narrow valley had been cultivated by the aid of the brook. The cucumber gardens were yet green, but the wheat harvest was over. At the end of the valley stands a small tell, covered with rubbish. This must have been the Acropolis, and in its name, Tell Fasaël, it is not difficult to recognise the fortress Fasaëlus, which was built by Herod, and called after his brother Fasaëlus. A few yards to the south of the tell are the ruins of a small city, among which I found a few Bedouïn families encamped with their tents. They knew Daoud, and saluted him kindly. There is no doubt that here lay the proper town of Fasaëlus, whilst the tell served as a fortified position. There are still the remains of an ancient aqueduct running from the fountain to the city along the rocks on the south side of the wadi; it is now, however, quite out of repair.

A few questions which I put to the inhabitants at Fasaëlus concerning the villages and antiquities of this neighbourhood, did not receive much elucidation. Whether they were afraid to communicate anything, I do not know; but I am sure they might have told me more than they did. The Jordan, according to

their account, is still an hour and a half distant from this point. Mount Surtabet bears from Fasaël 35° N.E. by compass.

We were an hour and three quarters in returning from Fasaël to Daumeh. When I reached that village I felt not a little weary and exhausted, as you will readily believe; but a short rest and a cup of coffee soon enabled me to continue my way. I found myself under the necessity of following the plan recommended by Daoud, viz., to return by the way of Jalûd to Jurish, near Akrabeh, there being no other place in this district where we thought we would be safe during the night. Besides, this track was interesting, for it led us past two ruins called Merâjim and Jebe'id, and brought the villages of Mgeir, Kefr-Malik, Tel-fît, Kurriût, Kefr-Stûna, and Kusra in view, at a short distance. Kurrût has been identified with Korea, a fortified place, mentioned several times in the wars of the Jews with the Romans, and Kefr-Stûna with Alexandria, a stronghold built by King Alexander Jannæus, and called after him. These places are often mentioned by Josephus. Dr Schultz, the late Prussian consul, visited them, and an account of the large and massive ruins of a castle which he found at Kefr-Stûna has been communicated by Ritter.* Whether the identification of Kefr-Stûna with Alexandria is correct, I shall not attempt to say. With regard to Kefr-Malik (the king's village), it strikes me that this name may lead to the discovery of the ancient place it represents. I perceived by the aid of my telescope that it has some old remains.

* *Erdkunde*, Th. xv. p. 454.

Had I gone further south I would soon have come to the ruins of Shiloh, as Turmus Aja lies only an hour to the west of Kefr-Stûna. I have thus accomplished an exploration of the country between Shiloh and Janohah, and from Shechem to Fasaël. The natural aspect of this mountain district is, upon the whole, pleasant; here and there brushwood presents itself, but where the land is cultivated the crops look very promising, and there is a place between Jalûd and Jurîsh, which is exceedingly beautiful and fertile. I had here a ride of an hour through valleys of such rare beauty and natural richness, that I feel myself quite unable to give you an adequate conception of it. Truly the best parts of Palestine remain unknown to travellers, who never leave the common track of pilgrims.

Jurîsh has excellent accommodation for spending the night. The villagers, all Moslems, knew Daoud, and hastened to get us milk, eggs, and fowls, with a kindness which reminded me of my experience in Western Galilee, namely, that the natives shew more simplicity and kindness, according to their remoteness from the high roads. But whatever these good people were able to do, they had no power over the sirocco, which still kept blowing. Even the night was hot, and not only hot, but oppressive, from the heavy, misty state of the atmosphere. Nevertheless, at three in the morning we got up. It was still quite dark; the coffee, however, was soon ready, our tent was struck, our animals laden, and by half-past four we were again *en route*. When the sun arose we had already descended several hundred feet. How I felt so encouraged and strengthened as to venture once more

into the burning plain of the Jordan, I really cannot tell. I have already told you how oppressive the heat was. I never conceived that there were places on this globe with such a scorching atmosphere; but I was animated by the interest of this unknown region, my mind was excited, and the happy termination of the expedition of one day made me anxious to try another; besides, I thought that if once the country of the Jordan were traversed I should have accomplished the heaviest part of my undertaking, and, you know, the view of the end of a long and difficult work, though a somewhat distant one, is very encouraging.

The route from Jurîsh that day lay by Merash-ed-Dîn, which ruin I had passed the day before. From this point, however, we now struck into a wadi running more to the east, and two hours and a half after we had left Jurîsh, found ourselves in Wadi-el-Ahmar, which, under the name of Wadi-Zakaska, leads down into a second and third mountain plateau, the latter of which I thought was even beneath the level of the sea. As I had, however, no barometer with me, I can say nothing definite as to the elevation of these plateaux. The first and second offered a very cheering aspect from their splendid crops of grain. In the second, the people were just beginning to reap. The season, from the lower situation of the ground, is here in advance of the higher plateau, in the same way as the Jordan valley is before the lower. This latter is surrounded by a horse-shoe shaped ridge of mountains called Jebel-Ihhma, which must be crossed in order to reach the Jordan valley. The path which we here followed is the highway from Nablous to Es-Salt. The exer-

tion of the ascent I would gladly have spared, but yet it had to be done. We therefore pursued our course along the northern edge of the horse-shoe, and no sooner had we reached the highest point than one of the most charming scenes I ever witnessed presented itself at my feet. Not the barren, yellowish, clayey plain of the Ghor, as I had expected, but an oasis in the desert, encompassed with a chain of hills gradually sloping down towards the south-east. A small river, with several other streams, all led off from the main source, irrigate this oasis like a large garden in which oleander bushes, ricinus-shrubs, thorny sidr-trees, green fields, cucumber and melon gardens with their golden fruits, and plots of rich and beautiful grain, form a variety which quite captivated me! My heart was, as it were, refreshed by the sight of water, foliage, and flowers; in the distance, too, I saw the green, winding track of the Jordan banks, and further still, the blue mountains of Gilead, but their beauty was lost in the perfection of what I saw immediately below me.

To this oasis we now descended, and about nine A.M. halted at a Bedouïn camp, which is called by the natives Kerawa. Shech Abdeh looked at us with no small surprise, but kindly bade us welcome. Once more, then, I found myself in the country of the Bedouïns—once more among this dirty race. Nevertheless, there was a considerable difference between these Bedouïns and those of Abû Dahûk, in the mountains of the Dead Sea. Yonder Bedouïns are the genuine roving children of the desert, who neither cultivate the land, nor have a fixed habitation. Those who live in the oasis of Kerawa cultivate the ground,

and are in constant communication with merchants from Nablous, who seem to find it worth their while to come hither with their articles of sale. Three such merchants—one of whom was a Greek Christian—I found in the tent of Shech Abdeh. In the course of the conversation, I also found these Bedouïns to be much more rigid Mohammedans than those of the Dead Sea. They have no mosque, but there are some among them who play the part of imans or priests, and, as such, are held in honour by the rest. Daoud, my guide, was well known among them also; and after he had communicated the object of my journey, calling it "fantasia," the seat of honour on Shech Abdeh's left hand side was soon offered to me, and our conversation, which was listened to by no small number of Bedouïn visitors, went on in quite a free and easy manner. It would be doing Shech Abdeh injustice did I not praise him for his hospitality. He is no ruffian like Abû Dahûk, whom I found it so difficult to keep within proper limits. No; Shech Abdeh treated me as became a shech; several cloaks were heaped upon one another, and these put upon an old carpet, to make a kind of divan; coffee and pipes were presented; also sour milk, the most delicious refreshment one can enjoy in this warm country. In one word, I felt altogether comfortable. The conversation with the shech was not without interest. I had first to answer him a host of insignificant questions concerning my map, which, after all, he seemed to look upon with suspicion. Gradually he grew more confident, and at last I obtained from him the position of several ruins which form no small addition to the fruit of my researches. The Bedouïn

visitors took a part in the conversation, and by much cross-questioning I contrived to get a good deal of information. Shech Abdeh, meanwhile, amused me not a little by the side-looks he cast at me, as if he meant to read in the expression of my countenance what passed within me. What seemed especially to strike him was, my total absence of anxiety; and really I must say that I felt as easy in his tent as among my friends at home. But the shech could not comprehend this. He examined me on all sides. At last he exclaimed, "Ah! this is it!"

"What?" asked I, smiling.

"Your pistol, or whatever kind of weapon it may be."

He saw a large copper screw, of a cylindrical form, peeping out of one of my pockets. It was the screw with which I fixed my surveying instrument on its pole; but the shech imagined it to be some strange kind of pistol.

I explained the use of the screw, but still he would not believe me. If this was not a pistol, then surely I had some other kind of weapon hidden under my dress; for what traveller would ever venture to go unarmed among the Bedouïns of the Ghor?

This remark of his caused me to speak to him of the mighty Arm upon which I relied, and which protected me better than all the armour of men; and, moving from one thing to another, I tried to explain to him the lost condition of man, and God's method of redemption through the blood of his Son Jesus Christ. He listened at first with astonishment and attention. To have God for his reconciled friend, and for his al-

mighty, benevolent protector, seemed to him very desirable; but when I spoke about God's holy justice, which must be satisfied, in order that God may pardon and love us, he became disquieted, and gave me to understand, by getting up and leaving the tent, he felt the same as Felix when he answered Paul, "For this time, enough about this matter. When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." * And how could it be otherwise? Who must not tremble while hearing of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," as long as he is unwilling to accept the Mediator between God and man—Him who alone can save us from the wrath to come?

When Shech Abeh thought that sufficient time had passed to change the conversation, he came back and resumed his seat under the shadow of his tent.

"Shook! Shook!" (it is very hot) he said, and there was nobody who contested the point; an universal acknowledgment of *shook* was uttered by the whole company. Yet I could not spend the day in listlessness, hot as it was. I requested one or two Bedouïns as guides, and rode to the Jordan. Daoud and Philip accompanied me; whilst the mukhari and Theodori, whose lazy disposition made him be very contented with the arrangement, remained in Shech Abdeh's tent in charge of the baggage.

It was now eleven A.M. The sirocco had increased in violence, and, as we took a south-eastern course to the place where the highway from Nablous to es-Salt crosses the river, whirled thick clouds of hot dust from the scorched plain right in our face. Indeed, I had

* Acts xxiv. 25.

to call forth all my energies in setting out on this expedition; but I would not leave the oasis of Kerawa without thoroughly exploring it, and, in fact, I found much that was interesting; first, the foundations of several houses, and an old water-mill, which seemed at one time to have been driven by one of the streams of Kerawah. A quarter of an hour further to the south stands a white plastered weli, called by the Bedouïns Abd-el-Kader. The brook winds through lonely clumps of sidr-trees and acacias to the Jordan. At thirty-five minutes' distance from the Bedouïn camp, it touches the south-eastern projection of the rocky hills which encompass the oasis. The rocks here seemed to be full of caves; some of these are improved by art, and their entrances cut out in the shape of gateways. It struck me that here might have been the burial-place of the town, as not far from this I saw the foundations of what seemed to me to have been an extensive town—in fact, such a town as might be expected to have been placed in so lovely a spot, notwithstanding the scorching siroccos which sweep over the country. If my eye has not deceived me, I saw at a few hundred yards' distance, on the brow of the rocky projection, the remains of an ancient castle. It was, however, too hot to turn aside from my road; and, from what my guides told me, I think I may have been wrong in my supposition. Now, the great question is, What city is represented by these foundations? I can give no positive answer. The Bedouïns call the place Khashmil-Macherûk, and a fountain in the middle of these ruins goes by the name of Josela. True, the situation corresponds with the city Archelaus, which,

according to the Peutinger Tables, lay four-and-twenty Roman miles north of Jericho, in the Ghor.* But I hesitate to identify the town of the cruel Archelaüs with Khashmil Macherûk, because of the great difference in names. If further researches of other travellers prove that Archelaüs has changed into Macherûk, I shall certainly say the change is great. If such a place as Macherus was known to us in the Ghor, I should think Macherûk corresponds with it well; but Josephus places Macherus on the north-east side of the Dead Sea.

From these ruins—near which I also found remains of the great Roman highway through the Ghor—to the Jordan, is a distance of forty minutes' ride. The burning tempest was blowing straight in our face; but at last we reached the dale in which the river winds its way between its green banks. Near Jericho this dale is not so distinctly defined. More to the north, near Beisan, it is still less so; but in the other part of the Ghor, the Jordan flows through a valley in the centre of the broad plain, sunk one, sometimes two, hundred feet below the plain itself, forming thus a vale in a valley. Molyneux, De Bertou, and Lynch, have well described this vale with its white chalky cliffs; by the help of a sketch which I took from the heights of the vale, notwithstanding the sirocco, I hope to bring the Jordan yet more clearly before your mind. From this same point I saw also the remains of a bridge over the Jordan, at perhaps five minutes' distance to the north of the place where now the Jordan is forded when going from Nablous to Es-Salt. I tried in vain to get

* Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, xvii. 15; xviii. 3.

at that ruin; the Jordan here divides into two streams, the banks of which are so thickly grown with bushes, that we found it impossible to clear our way through the marshy jungle. This must be the bridge mentioned by Molyneux in the fifth day of his Jordan excursion, between Fath-Allah and Seguia, names which I found, however, unknown to Shech Abdeh and his people. Lieutenant Lynch, in his glowing description of the Jordan and its "horrible rapids and cascades"—a description which, compared with the journal of Molyneux, shews us how we must understand the fantastic picture of the American naval officer—Mr Lynch, I say, mentions this ruined bridge under the name of Jisr-Damiëh, and informs us that its construction is Roman, with three arches, of which two are thrown down; the width of the central arch being fifteen feet. If the names of Damiëh and Surtabet, or rather Sartabeh, can have any correspondence with the "city Adam, that is beside Zaretan,"* I feel strongly inclined to think that Adam must have been somewhere in this part of the Ghor, and Mount Sartabeh, which is about due west from this ford of the Jordan, may perhaps indicate the position of Zaretan. In 1 Kings iv. 12, is mentioned "all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah." This Zartanah has been considered the same as Zaretan, which in 1 Kings vii. 46, occurs once more as Zarthan, near which King Solomon cast the brazen works for the house of the Lord: "In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan." From these texts of Scripture, people have

* Joshua iii. 16.

inferred that Zarthan was situated between Succoth and Beisan; but the name Zartanah, in 1 Kings iv. 12, must not be understood as meaning merely the city Zarthan, but the whole district of Zarthan, which is clear from the adjoining expression, "all Beth-shean." Now, as Mount Sartabeh is the most prominent hill in the whole plain of the Jordan, it can easily be accounted for that the northern part of this plain was called the district of Zarthan, or of Zartanah, which did actually lie next to the still more northern part of the Ghor, called after its capital Beth-shean. It has been noticed by the learned, that the word of the original translated by *clay-ground*, or *thickness of the ground* (1 Kings vii. 46), properly means *the city of Adam*, and that the reading of this verse should be: "The king cast them at Adam, between Succoth and Zarthan." The question, therefore, arises, whether somewhere about Mount Sartabeh old ruins are to be found? and the answer is in the affirmative. Not only on the top of Mount Sartabeh do the ruins of an ancient castle stand,* probably the citadel of the proper town of Zarthan, which must have been at its base; but also, in a parcel of ground between the mountain and the Jordan, now called by the Bedouïns Um-tail, large hewn stones are found scattered about, stones which evidently have once belonged to some town, but without its name having been preserved. This parcel of land, Um-tail, lies a little to the south of Jisr-Damiëh, but at no great distance. Perhaps it would well correspond with the position of Adam.

The shade afforded by the tamarisks of the Jordan

* *Ritter Erdkunde*, 15 Th. bl. 455, &c.

was very welcome, and the water of the river very refreshing. Moreover, we were sheltered here from the sirocco, and the river was clear and fordable, not muddy and deep, as at the Bathing-place of the pilgrims. One quality only it did not possess: it was not cool, but rather lukewarm, as you may imagine from the high temperature of the air. Still, I believe that half an hour's bathing in the river preserved me that day from the consequences of the extraordinary heat. Never was water of greater service to me than now. As we returned home—to the tent of Shech Abdeh, namely—I felt already its beneficial effects. My spirits seemed to return, and my companions experienced the same beneficial effect.

We remained that night in the camp of the Bedouïns; of course I had my own tent, as to sleep under the goat's-hair tent-cloth of Shech Abdeh would have caused me intolerable suffering from vermin, a plague which I could not even escape entirely, in consequence of my conversation with these filthy people. There was much to remind me of what I had experienced in the south of Judea; and here, as well as there, I was perfectly safe. Two Bedouïns kept guard at my tent, after the Shech had left me at an advanced hour of the night. I gave him a baksheesh of twenty piastres for his guidance to the Jordan, and for his hospitable reception—a sum quite out of proportion with the handfuls that travellers generally throw away, but quite satisfactory to Shech Abdeh. In this I followed Daoud's advice, and now mention it to you, that you may thereby measure your generosity if ever you take up the pilgrim's staff to go on a tour to the Holy Land.

My intention was next morning to ascend Mount Sartabeh, which is not more than an hour from Kerawa. It would have been an interesting point for my measurements. But unfortunately, or I should rather say, happily, during the night the wind changed, the sirocco had ceased, and a cool atmosphere came in the morning, rolling down the mountain, in the form of large dense clouds, to the yet glowing plain of the Jordan. The clouds completely obscured the view, and I therefore had to leave Sartabeh unvisited.

And how shall I describe the feeling of refreshment which the morning brought with it? It was, indeed, a change from death to life, not only figuratively, but even literally—a rising out of the atmosphere of a furnace to the invigorating air of the mountains. I need not assure you how all nature revived and came forth with new charms. At an early hour the reapers were in the field gathering in the remainder of their crops, their faces brightened with the pleasant change. The birds, too, seemed with new voices to chant their praises from among the thorny sidr-trees; the oleander bushes flowered with renewed splendour; and in the melon and cucumber gardens the broad, green leaves had spread upon them a new tinge of life. Everything was charming; the "Lord was renewing the face of the earth." * The loving-kindness of the Lord met me from all his works. Ah, thought I, if man would only consider! How does he trample upon his own happiness, by not devoting attention to God's works! How much enjoyment is there in observing and meditating upon them! True, the Lord's works

* Psalm civ. 30.

in nature do not shew us all that His heart contains with regard to man; but so much they declare to us of God's glory and loving-kindness, omnipotence and benevolence, that we cannot possibly look upon them with any degree of attention without exclaiming with the Psalmist, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being: my meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord" *

The oasis of Kerawa is full of the remains of houses and mills; of the latter, some are still used. These ruins, however, have no particular name; but after passing from the oasis through the narrow and picturesque Wadi-Zeika into another mountain basin to the north of Kerawa, through which flows the chief stream of Wadi-Ferra', one meets with the remains of buildings at the foot of a large tell called el-Bassariëh. Robinson writes this name el-Bassaliah, and supposes them to be identical with Archelaüs. † Irby and Mangles passed by this locality in 1818, but seemed not to have noticed the ruins. The plain of el-Bassariëh is much less cultivated than the oasis of Kerawa, though the brook Ferra' (not *Feria*, as the maps have it) affords here the same opportunity of irrigation as in the latter.

An hour and a half to the north of Shech Abdeh's camp, we crossed the brook, and now began to ascend the mountains, leaving Wadi-Ferra' with its beautiful oleander-trees on the left. Our way gradually ascended between isolated mountains, without meeting with anything like those steep precipices which one has to

* Psalm civ. 33, 34. † Ritter, vol. xvi. p. 457.

ascend or descend in Wadi-Fasaël and Wadi-el-Ahmar. The whole country, the mountains as well as the valleys, was covered with the richest vegetation.

It struck me that there was grass enough here to feed all the cattle of Palestine; but, alas! such blessings are lost as long as the land remains trodden down as it is in the present day. Except a few fellahîns at the Ferra' brook, I saw not a single vestige of human habitation all the way from Kerawa to Tamûn. Having passed a tell with ruins, called Thala, at two and a half hours' distance from Kerawa—probably the Thella of Josephus, "a village in the vicinity of the Jordan," and possibly, too, the Taanath-Shiloh of Josh. xvi. 6—we came on a broad plain gradually ascending to the north-west, and there, at the foot of a mountain, we halted to breakfast. And why there? Because we found water in the ancient wells of a deserted village, called 'Atûf, the large hewn stones of which convinced me at the same time, that this village was chiefly built from the remains of an ancient town. In turning up that portion of the Scriptures which refers to this district, I have little hesitation in recognising in 'Atûf the frontier town "Tappuah, on the borders of Manasseh and Ephraim." * How that city because of the richness of its fountains was called En-Tappuah, I could easily understand, as also how the city itself was given to Ephraim, whilst "the land of Tappuah," the very plain which slopes to the south-east, was apportioned to Manasseh. Tappuah is also mentioned as one of the thirty-one royal cities which were conquered by Joshua. † Two more places mentioned in

* Josh. xvi. 8; xvii. 7, 8. † Ib. xii. 17.

Scripture lay on my road—Tamûn and Tûbas, two villages to the north-west of 'Atûf,—the former at an hour and a quarter's distance, and the latter three quarters of an hour to the north of Tamûn. Tûbas has already been mentioned by others as identical with Thebez, where Abimelech was slain by the hand of a woman,* and Tamûn appears to me to be the Tabbath of Judges vii. 22. Had I been allowed to have it all my own way, I should have gone on from Tamûn to Beisan; but Daoud most strenuously refused to accompany me thither. He pretended not to know the land or its inhabitants, and to have been peremptorily charged by the Metzellim of Nablous to go no further to the north than Tamûn. All the arguments I brought against his determination, were to no purpose. In order to proceed on my journey to the north, I had first to return to Nablous to ask the Governor for a new guide. The return occupied four hours' travelling, but I had to exercise patience.

It is scarcely two hours since I arrived here. You perceive, my friend, I have at once taken up the pen to tell you all about my safe return. I must now go to the governor. Farewell.

* Judges ix. 53, 54.

ANOTHER EXCURSION TO THE GHOR, AND ACROSS THE JORDAN. FROM BEISAN TO NAZARETH AND THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS.

BEISAN (BETH-SHEAN), *May* 16.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—My last letter to you I left a few days ago at Nablous, in the hands of Auwdi, my Protestant friend, who promised to take the first safe opportunity of sending it to Jerusalem. Hoping that you have duly received it, I continue the narrative of my travels.—

As soon as we arrived at Nablous, and had pitched our tent, I went to the Metzellim to ask for another guide. To my great surprise, I met at the gate Dr Eli Smith, who had just arrived with his American fellow-traveller. You can easily imagine how many questions we had to ask and to answer regarding our adventures since we saw each other in Jerusalem. It was curious to find that they had been treading on my steps, having visited Akrabeh, Jurîsh, and Daumeh. Our routes, however, had been entirely different, as they had travelled from Jerusalem in a north-eastern direction.

"And where do you intend to go now?" asked Dr Smith.

"I am just on my way to the Governor to ask for another guide to the north-eastern part of his district,

as I wish particularly to search for the ruins of Pella on the other side of the Jordan. May I ask what your plans are?"

"They coincide very much with your own; we had intended to cross the Jordan in the neighbourhood of Beisan, which would take us to the very place where Pella must have been. Jabesh is also as yet undiscovered, and Dr Robinson is anxious to explore with the view to find it. What do you say to our making a joint excursion to that locality? You are aware that on the other side of the Jordan we shall be surrounded with Bedouïns who acknowledge no authority either of metzellim or pasha. It seems to me that it would afford additional security if we went together, there being less danger of attack when the company is large. And, besides, you are provided with a firman, which obliges the Metzellim to afford you as much protection as is in his power; you will have no difficulty in procuring an armed guide, which will be of advantage to us, while the addition of our caravan will strengthen yours. What do you say to this?"

The proposal was acceptable to me, not only for the reasons stated, but as it gave me the privilege of the society of travellers so celebrated. I replied, that I should be very happy, and that I would come shortly to their tents to talk the matter over, and forthwith hurried to the Metzellim.

The Metzellim, who, like most of the petty eastern despots, is disposed to take things easily, was invisible at this hour.

"He is in the harem," his attendants said, which meant, that his excellency did not wish to be disturbed.

"Very well," said I, "tell the Metzellim that I shall call again this evening, because the business which I have to transact with him requires despatch."

At eight o'clock, a janissary came to tell me that the Governor would now give me an audience. I repaired immediately to the serai, and was ushered into the private apartments, where the old gentleman was enjoying his chibouk. After salutation, I told him that the guide whom he had given me to Akrabeh had been of great service to me, but that he had alleged his orders were to conduct me to Tûbas, and no further, so that I was under the necessity of coming to ask for another guide, with whom I might explore the more northerly parts of his territory. On hearing the nature of my business he stared at me, as much as to say, "Is it for this trifling matter you disturb my evening rest?" which was quite in keeping with his answer given me by Philip, in the following words, "The Governor says that he will send his people to-morrow to look for a guide."

"To-morrow!" I said, "I wish to start to-morrow at day-break; I have not a moment to lose, and therefore my request must be attended to to-night."

Not being at all accustomed to such urgent demands, the Governor could not restrain the expression of his astonishment. Philip faithfully translated his answer and also my reply, which was, that I was perfectly astonished at the manner in which he treated the commands of his lord and master, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire; that my return to Shechem was owing to the inadequate provision which he had made for my journey; that being in the possession of the most posi-

tive orders of the Sultan, I would not suffer one of his metzellims to offer any objections, much less to dismiss me with the command to call again to-morrow; that I would now leave him in consequence of his uncivil reception, and if he did not send that very night a proper guide to my tent, in compliance with the instructions contained in my firman, I would depart next morning without a guide, and then he would be responsible for all the consequences that might result from his failing to perform his duty. At the same time I rose, to shew him that I felt deeply offended by his conduct. You may think that in acting thus I shewed myself to be even a greater despot than the Metzellim; but, my dear friend, I must justify myself in assuming so dignified an attitude, by assuring you that it is impossible to get anything done by these petty tyrants if such a spirit be not manifested. Our Western formalities are out of place in the East. If you wish a metzellim or any other Turkish authority to pay proper attention to you, and to fulfil the obligations under which your firman lays him, you must never appear to doubt for an instant his implicit obedience to the commands of his master. One of two things is certain: he will either serve you; or if he sees that you will submit to his usurpation of independence, he will treat you with utter neglect. The higher the tone which he assumes, the higher must yours be in return.

My answer to the Metzellim, however out of place such language might be among us, produced the desired effect. At ten o'clock he sent me an apology by Auwdi, with the promise that an armed guide should be at my tent before sunrise, to conduct me wherever I desired

to go. The chayal was punctual; he was a cousin of the Metzellim, and had received special injunctions to attend to my wishes. It was, however, nine o'clock before we started, as the canteen and the provision chest had to be supplied with the productions of the bazaar; and Theodori, who is always slow in his movements, seems nowhere to be so lazy as in the market-place. But even his delays had an end, and shortly after, our now doubled caravan rounded the foot of Mount Ebal, on its way to Tûbas.

My time permits me to give you only the general outline of this day's march. The road was partly the same by which I had returned the day before from Tamûn with Daoud, through the northern part of the Mokhna plain. This, while it is the high road from Shechem to Beth-shean, is at the same time the road by which the caravans pass from Jerusalem to Damascus, and which our blessed Saviour must have trodden on His way between Judea and Galilee.

In rounding the foot of Mount Ebal we passed the ruins of a village called 'Askar; possibly this is Iscariot the birthplace of Judas, which, as Halma and others conjecture, must have been somewhere in this locality. There is yet a rich fountain, round which we saw a number of people collected as we passed. The northern chain of hills descends gradually from Ebal. The road follows the eastern declivity of these hills, having on the right hand a wild chasm, which commences at Beit-fûrîk as a small breach in the ground, but gradually widens and deepens between frightful precipices. At the distance of an hour's ride to the north-east of Mount Ebal, this chasm, which is called Wadi-Bidan,

turns eastward and joins Wadi-Ferra'. It is at the junction of these valleys that the plain of Mokhna ends, narrowing to a defile through which the road runs to Beisan. Before coming to this defile, the traveller has enjoyed, ever since leaving the valley of Shechem, a delightful view of the villages, Beit-fûrîk, Asmûd, Deir, and Salim.

Our intention was to deviate from the direct road to Tûbas, that we might visit Talûse, an important village situated on a high hill to the north-west of the northern extremity of the Mokhna plain. Dr Robinson considered Talûse to be the ancient Thirza, the capital of the kings of Israel before they fixed upon Samaria, the hill of Shemer, for their residence.* In the *Biblical Researches*, vol. iii. p. 158, he had mentioned this as a conjecture; it was now in his power to satisfy himself by personal observation. We therefore took a pathway which was on the same mountain slope as the road to Tûbas, but higher, and which soon turned to the north-west, leading down into a valley running parallel to that which we had left. From this we ascended the hill which is crowned by Talûse, making our way through extensive olive-gardens. As we rode on, Dr Robinson remarked that all traces of royalty had disappeared, a remark with which I could not but agree, granting that this is indeed Thirza; I am inclined to think so from the fact that the position agrees with that of Thirza given by ancient authors, who say that it lay to the east of Samaria, at a distance of three hours' travelling. With the exception of a few sepulchral caves, subterranean granaries, wells, and

* 1 Kings xiv. 17; xv. 33, &c.

old hewn stones, nothing of ancient Thirza remains in Talûse. When we had taken a few angles from the flat roof of the Shech's house, we descended by the north-east side of the hill, and after a ride of an hour and a quarter, under the shade of olive-trees, through a winding but picturesque valley, arrived at the mountain basin at the head of Wadi-Ferra'. The mountains in this neighbourhood contain several rich fountains, the streams from which unite in the hollow of Wadi-Ferra'. My map will shew you this in detail.

On the day before, when crossing the streams with which this valley is intersected, it occurred to me that this might be the spot where the host of Gideon had encamped. The fountain Harod may have been one of the chief sources of the Ferra', possibly the fountain near which now stand the ruins of a Saracenic tower. This I give as a conjecture. I have not met with the name of Harod in the locality.

The mountaineers have taken advantage of the water in this valley, using it to drive some mills which they have built. At one of these mills we halted, near the square Saracenic tower, which the inhabitants call Burj-el-Ferra'. We observed here traces of the old highway between Shechem and Beth-shean. Following this way for about an hour, we came to the village of Tûbas. Old hewn stones and wells point this out as one of Israel's ancient towns (Thebez). Tûbas stands on a hill at the northern end of a plain surrounded by mountains, and has 'Ainûn and Tamûn facing it on the south-east at a short distance. The hill of Tûbas is skirted by fine olive groves, but the view from the summit is not extensive, in consequence

of the encircling mountains. At Tûbas we had to plan our further excursion to the Ghor, and so we repaired to the Shech for advice, as well as to ask for a guide. He told us that we had better go on to Yasîr, a village at the distance of an hour's ride to the north of Tûbas, that we might there procure a guide, who would take us on the following morning to the Ghor. We followed his advice. Crossing an elevation to the north of Tûbas, we came into another mountain basin, having on the north side a mountain of considerable height, called Jebel Haskîn; on the east it slopes down into a valley which is lost among the lower hills. In the centre of this plain lies Yasîr, which I think must be identified with Asher (Joshua xvii. 7, 11), one of the frontier towns of Manasseh. Eusebius mentions Asher as being situated on the high road from Shechem to Beisan, fifteen Roman miles from the former. This corresponds well with the position of Yasîr. Except in the passage already cited, we do not find Asher mentioned in the Bible; yet it must have been a town of splendour and importance, to judge from the antiquities which are found here. Among others is seen at the south of the village the ruin of an ancient building, which has been constructed of large hewn stones, and highly decorated, especially in the frieses of the doorway. We saw a handsomely worked lid of a sarcophagus lying on the ground among other rubbish. Was this building a palace or a sepulchre? I cannot tell. Dr Robinson will perhaps throw light on this.

At Yasîr we pitched our tents amidst luxuriant corn fields which covered the plain. The villagers did not seem pleased with this intrusion, and their unfriendly

feelings were manifested in their countenances. The presence of the chayal of Nablous prevented them from giving vent to their feelings in any act of hostility, and besides, the Shech of Yâsir had been expressly enjoined by the Metzellim to attend to our wants. The greatest want which it was in his power to supply was that of a guide to the Ghor. But, notwithstanding the Metzellim's orders, and the persuasive arguments of Dr Smith, who had a long conversation with him in his tent, he positively refused to give us a guide. The secret of his refusal was, I believe, that he expected us to offer him a large sum of money to procure a guide. The covetous disposition of the villagers appeared in many ways, and it is not a matter of surprise, seeing that they are Bedouïns who have abandoned the wandering life of their tribe, and settled as Fellahîns in this village; and the Bedouïns, you know, never belie their character.

While Dr Smith was making arrangements for our next day's journey, I climbed to the top of Jebel Haskîn with one of the Fellahs. It was fatiguing enough after six hours' riding in the heat of the day, but the magnificent view from this elevation richly repaid my trouble. A very wide survey of the surrounding country is obtained; the only obstruction to the view being a still higher hill to the north-west. The sun began to set when I reached the top. The colours now were gorgeous. There was a wonderful variety of tints melting into each other, blue and purple prevailing; while over the whole was shed a glow which is peculiar to an Eastern landscape. The valley of the Jordan was especially lovely, seen through the brownish-green

oak shrubs on the mountain top. The ravines and mountain slopes of Gilead and Bashan were all distinctly seen, relieved by their deep shadows. On the north rose the mountains of Gilboa, and beyond them little Hermon surrounded by the great plain of Jezreel. Samaria's mountains lay to the left, while behind us was the tract of country over which we had just passed, the villages of Tûbas and Talûse, Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, whose ridges bounded the view to the south.

Next morning we were early astir, but were long of starting owing to the annoying conduct of the wretched villagers. We thought that by keeping firm we should at last make the Shech give way, but it was vain. We were already on horseback, but no guide was forthcoming. The Shech with some of his friends stood looking at us with irritating calmness, positively refusing to assist us. They spoke of the dangers of the journey, arising from the badness of the road, and the haunts of robbers, dangers which were conjured up for the purpose of putting an extravagant value on the services of a man who had only to travel with us a few hours to shew us the way. All Dr Smith's experience of men and manners, and the power which such experience bestows, were of no avail against the stubborn independence of these people, and their determination to make us gratify their lust of avarice. I was at a loss to conceive how this would end, when happily the Shech of Tûbas came up, and, seeing our dilemma, offered to be our guide. But you must not imagine that he intended us to have the benefit of his services without remuneration. Far from it. He asked for

twenty piastres, though, as we afterwards found, he was going that way at any rate, to visit some people of Tûbas, who were reaping their harvest in the Ghor.

Following the Shech's advice, we sent on our baggage to the Ghor by another road. A man of Yâsir went along with it to shew the mukhari the way. They went through Wadi-Chusneh, a valley running to the north-east, while we took the direct road to the Ghor by Wadi-Maleh. Wadi-Maleh, or the "Salt Valley," receives its name from a hot spring of mineral water, rising about five miles to the east of Yâsir, and sending down its waters to the Ghor. When at Kerawa I had been told of this spring, and also of the ruins of Kâlat-Maleh. The natives believe these waters to have a curative power, and resort to them in cases of rheumatic disease. I can easily imagine that the volcanic spring possesses such properties. By the side of the well are seen the foundations of a building, which, from their being in a long row, and from an apparent division into small apartments, I believe to be the remains of baths. The ancient inhabitants must have known the value of this spring, and taken advantage of it.

The castle of Maleh stands a little to the west of the spring; it is now in ruins, but there remains enough to determine its former shape. It is small, and of an oval form, its greatest length being from east to west. Its outline is irregular, as the wall follows the form of the rock on which it is built. The walls in their present state have been built by the Saracens or Crusaders, but the original building must have been of a much earlier date, as appears from a few large bevelled stones which have found their place among the other mate-

rials. It seems probable that the castle was built to guard the entrance into the interior of Ephraim by this valley. How pleasant it would have been if I had been able to give you some historical incidents connected with Kâlat-Maleh, but I find it mentioned neither by ancient nor modern authors. Dr Robinson observed with truth, as we walked among the ruins, that, in all probability, no European traveller had visited the spot since the time of the Crusades. The castle occupies a position of great strength and importance, as the rock on which it is built rises in the centre of the valley like an island in the channel of a river. Immediately below Kâlat-Maleh we found an excellent fountain, from which the castle had in all likelihood formerly been supplied with water. Encamped by its side were two poor Fellah families residing; they had twisted the branches of the shrubs together, so as to obtain shelter from the sun. You can imagine their astonishment at the sight of Frank travellers.

After passing the hot spring, our guide led us down from Wadi-Maleh in a north-easterly direction to Wadi-es-Shûk. Here we saw a ruin on our left hand, called Churbet-es-Shûk. We soon issued from the wadi, when we got a fine open view of the Jordan valley, which we approached over a low and uncultivated country. The sight greeted us unexpectedly. "Already in the Ghor!" thought I; "how is it possible? Where are the steeps of Wadi-el-Ahmar or Wadi-Fasaël?" The seeming marvel admits of explanation. The southern part of the Ghor lies in a very low level; Kerawa, for instance, being more than a thousand feet below the level of the sea; at the same

time the mountains enclosing it are high, which sufficiently accounts for the steep and difficult descent in that region. In the upper part again, the valley lies much higher, and the height of the hills is less, so that the descent is not so formidable as by the southern wadis. Keeping these circumstances in view, the reason is evident why the armies of Syria and the countries to the east of the Jordan entered the land of Israel by the northern wadis of the Ghor. They could even take their chariots up these valleys. Reading once more with closer attention the account of Gideon's encounter with the Midianites, the scene and the circumstances of the conflict and the pursuit seem to me to have been as follows:—"Then all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel" (Judges vi. 33). Gideon, under the direction of God's Spirit, calls together an army from his own tribe, as well as from Asher, Zebulon, and Naphtali, "and they came up to meet them" (ver. 35). Gideon is oppressed with doubts, which God removes by the miracle of the woollen fleece. He then comes forth with thirty-two thousand men, and encamps by the fountain Harod (near Burj-el-Ferra'). The Midianites, seeing the gathering of the children of Israel, break up their encampment and advance, as is evident from the change of position indicated in Judges vii. 1, as compared with chap. vi. 33. "The host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh in the valley." Possibly the plain of Tûbas or that of Yâsir was the place where they lay on that fatal night when Gideon "went down" unto

them. Of the thirty-two thousand God suffered him to keep only three hundred, "lest Israel vaunt themselves against God, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." The remainder return every man to his place; the three hundred he keeps with him, and "the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley" (ch. vii. 8). The elevation on which Gideon was with his men may have been the high rocky ridge which forms the northern side of the basin of Wadi-Ferra', separating it from the valley of Tûbas. The night sets in: Gideon and his men approach. They take up their position all round about the camp. He gives the signal—the pitchers are broken—the torches are held up—the trumpets sound—they cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" Terror and confusion seize upon the Midianites. No one knows what is happening; every man's sword is set against his fellow, "even throughout all the host." There is a general flight. In what direction? To the Jordan, that they might find refuge in the fortresses of their own land. And by what way would they go? By those valleys which lead directly to the river. "The host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath." None of these places are known with certainty. Abel-meholah may be connected with Wadi-Maleh, or Melha. Jerome places it at a distance of ten Roman miles to the south of Beth-shean, which agrees with the position of Churbet-es-Shûk.* This I give only as a supposition, as also my connecting Tamûn with Tabbath. It is certain, however, that the Midianites fled

* See also 1 Kings iv. 12. Elisha the prophet was born in Abel-meholah (1 Kings xix. 16).

partly through the valley east of Tamûn, and partly through Wadi-Melha or Maleh, on their way to Succoth, Gideon pursuing them (Judges viii. 5) across the Jordan. The fords of the Jordan "unto Beth-bara," which were taken by the men of Ephraim, must have been those by which the Bedouïns now cross the river to the east-north-east of the entrance of Wadi-Maleh. Succoth presents a difficulty which I cannot altogether solve. As we were travelling over the waste and undulating plain at the foot of the mountains, we came all at once upon the ruins of a town. "Haida Sukkouth" (this is Succoth), said our guide. We were here but half an hour's distance from the Jordan. The position agrees exactly with that given to Succoth by Jerome; and looking at Genesis xxxiii. 17, in connexion with the previous chapter, and also at 1 Kings vii. 46, we appear to be authorised in placing Succoth on the right bank of the Jordan. But how can we reconcile this with Joshua xiii. 27, and Judges viii. 4, 5? In the former passage Succoth is called a city of Gad, and according to the latter it would appear that Gideon crossed the Jordan before coming to Succoth. Had there been corresponding remains on the eastern side, I should not have hesitated to receive two cities of that name; but the only ruins of Succoth known are those found on the spot to which our guide led us. The only explanation that seems possible is, to understand Succoth, Joshua xiii. 27, as comprehending this whole part of the Jordan valley on the west as well as on the east side, all belonging to the tribe of Gad. The expression, "Jordan and his border, even unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan

eastward," is probably to be taken in that sense, and I incline the more to this view as I believe I recognise Beth-aram, also mentioned in this verse as belonging to Gad, situated on a tell to the north-north-west of Succoth, and bearing now the name of Tell-Hamra.

The Shech of Tûbas hastened towards a clump of wild fig-trees, a few paces below the ruins of Succoth. Beneath the shade of these trees rises a magnificent fountain, which sends its waters to the Jordan. A better place for halting to breakfast after four hours' riding, we could not desire. Our horses found shelter under the broad dark leaves of the fig-trees; our carpet was spread by the side of the water, and our glowing faces found an hour's relief. You may judge of the heat that day from the height at which our thermometer stood; but first, that you may enter into our feelings, imagine yourself travelling on a broiling day in mid-summer, over a wide barren heath, and coming in sight of a group of trees which promise you refreshment under their cool shade. You can have no difficulty in conceiving that as you are about to enter, a shiver would creep over you at the idea of the difference in the temperature—here, in the sun so terribly hot, there, in the shade, so cool and chilly. Such was exactly our feeling on approaching the clump of fig-trees at the fountain of Succoth in the burning Ghor. Yet in this cool spot at the edge of the water, the thermometer stood at 92° Fahr. Now, if the heat was so great here, you can form an idea of the temperature under the full blaze of the sun. We had, however, to resume our march to make for the appointed place of meeting with the mukharis.

A winding path through a scorched grass plain, here and there varied with fields, led us to what was really a rural spot, near a brook called 'Ain-el-Beida. The Fellahs of Tûbas were here engaged in completing the harvest; some were cutting, others were loading their donkeys with sheaves to be carried to the threshing-floors; and in the midst of this busy scene, I saw the receiver of tribute carefully estimating the amount that was due to him. This was the place where we had told our servants to meet us with the baggage, according to the Shech's advice, but no mukharis were to be seen. In a country where no authority is recognised, and where power confers right of property, the losing sight of the baggage is no indifferent matter. We therefore sent the chayal of Nablous to the entrance of Wadi-Chusneh, which was not far distant, and told him to ascend the valley till he met the mukharis. Happily our anxiety did not last longer than two hours, the greater part of which time we spent among the stones of an ancient and important ruin. Some people have taken up their residence in this place, which goes by the name of Riddegah. Of this name I do not think that anything can be made, but there is a name of greater significance in this neighbourhood, viz. that of "Shech Sâlim," given to a Moslem tomb or weli. From the name as well as from the position, it being at a distance of eight Roman miles from Beisan, which is the distance given by Jerome, and also from the great abundance of water, I am led to conclude that this is the site of Salim mentioned in John iii. 23, being near to Ænon, where John baptized, "because there was much water there." It is true

that the name of a weli has nothing to do with the name of a city. But as Salim must have been situated hereabouts, I cannot think that this weli has been merely accidentally erected in honour of a shech of that name, but rather in honour of some shech of Salim who had procured for himself the respect of the people. I communicated my views to my fellow-travellers, who did not, however, agree with me, and as I had not Philip with me, I was not able to question the natives regarding Ænon and Salim as I could have wished. But it satisfies me that I have found in the very position assigned by Jerome to the Salim of John iii. 23, a ruin in which the name is preserved, though it be but as a weli, and situated moreover where there is much water. Not only the brook of Wadi-Chusneh runs close to this site, but there is a splendid fountain gushing forth from below a rock under the shade of a tree beside the weli. Rivulets also wind about in all directions, so that we were quite in raptures at this rich abundance of water. I have found few places in Palestine of which one could say so truly, "Here is much water."

After waiting for some time, we made half an hour's advance in the direction of Beisan. We now came upon another party of Fellahs, who were also engaged at harvest-work. Further than this we could not go for fear of missing our baggage; besides, the day was far advanced, and the oppressive heat had exhausted us. Much to our relief, the mules soon made their appearance, and we again enjoyed the shelter of our tents. The Fellahs, seeing that we were under the protection of the Shech of Tûbas, behaved decently; and as Dr Smith, by the important acquisition of a

thorough acquaintance with Arabic, was soon on intimate terms with them, we succeeded in engaging two of the younger shechs to accompany us next day on an excursion across the Jordan. They were men of rather prepossessing appearance. They asked for 160 piastres as payment for this service, but Dr Smith coolly reduced their demands to half that sum. That night, together with the chayal, they watched our tents, and by half-past four on the following morning we were on our way to the ford between Succoth and Makhûs, the latter being the place of our night's encampment. Our baggage we did not take with us, but sent it under care of the chayal to Beisan, where we intended to arrive in the afternoon.

Our excursion since leaving Shechem has been highly interesting, as it has given us the knowledge of a district hitherto unexplored. I must still be sparing with my information about ruins and antiquities, mountains and valleys, &c. Keep in mind, however, that my map and geographical notes will hereafter supply what cannot find a place in my letters.

Come now and follow me across the Jordan.

In three quarters of an hour after leaving the well-watered plain of Sâlim, travelling in a south-eastern direction, we came to the banks of the Jordan. We do not find at this part of the Ghor the deeply sunk vale in the valley, which we saw more to the south; it disappears gradually as you travel from the south toward the Lake of Galilee, till at the place where we now were there is but a gently sloping hollow, in which the waters of the Jordan flow. The river, on the

other hand, is broader here, and the vegetation on both banks extends much further to the east and west than in the lower part of the Ghor, forming, as it were, a garden so beautiful and pleasant that I could for a moment imagine myself standing by one of the Paradise-like streams of Java or Celebes. The sun rose while we were preparing to ford the river, brightening the green of the willows and tamarisks around us. The sky above us was perfectly clear, the air cool, not yet heated by the rays of a vertical sun; the water, calm and transparent, flowed gently over a bed of lava, limestone, and flint pebbles; the solemn silence which pervaded the scene was only disturbed by the melodies of the nightingale. Is it a wonder that I lavish praise upon such a stream?

At the spot where we crossed, the river divides round an island, and thus increases its breadth. But its depth even here is not to be despised, for it was with great difficulty that the horses could keep their footing, as the water was nearly as high as their backs. From this I could see the impossibility of crossing the Jordan except by swimming when it is swollen, and while no ferry-boats or bridges are provided. I could not help thinking to what profit so abundant a supply of water might be turned. Even without the Jordan the Ghor is capable of irrigation by its manifold rivulets which descend from the hills; but what a Garden of Eden would this valley become were water from the Jordan diverted into it! The very climate would undergo a change, for those scorching winds which sweep over the Ghor, gathering increase of heat with every

mile of surface over which they pass, would then be greatly cooled by the trees and streams with which the country would abound.

What shall not the eye of man behold when Israel's curse shall be turned into blessing!

We had scarcely travelled for half an hour on the other side, in a northerly direction, when we came upon a ruin called et-Tût, situated at the entrance of Wadi-Jabes. This valley is undoubtedly called after Jabesh in Gilead, though that day's experience proved that a town of the name of Jabesh is unknown to the natives. At et-Tût we found an encampment of Bedouïns, who received us in no friendly spirit. We were instantly surrounded by fierce-looking fellows, armed with matchlocks, who supposed that we were in connexion with Hâmed Pasha, the military commander of Beirût, now commissioned to carry on the conscription in this region by force. They had driven away him and his troops the day before, and they intended to treat us in like manner. They worked up their passions to a great height, giving vent to them in abusive language, loud enough to deafen us. Nevertheless, in less than a quarter of an hour we were seated among them taking coffee as with old friends, Dr Smith and the guides having explained to them that our excursion was merely "fantasia." We requited their hospitality with a few piastres, and passed on.

In order to find Pella, and also Jabesh-Gilead, which could be at no more than six Roman miles from it, we had proposed to explore a certain area within which we felt sure of finding these places. The posi-

tion of Beisan was the *datum* by which the problem was to be solved, as it is manifest from 1 Samuel xxxi. 12, that the inhabitants of Jabesh, in the course of one night, went to Beisan (Beth-shan), carried off the bodies of Saul and his sons, that they might give them honourable burial in their own city, and returned to their own side of the Jordan, putting the river between themselves and their enemies before the day broke. Taking into consideration that Beisan is an hour and a half's distance to the west of the Jordan, it is not difficult to trace on the map a circle within the circumference of which Jabesh must have been situated.

However, with all our calculations, we failed to discover it; the reason probably was that we directed our course too much to the northward, for Dr Smith, having the power of communicating with the natives, had undertaken to make inquiries, and had come to the conclusion that we should go to the village of Kefr-abîl, which lies about four hours' distance east-north-east of the ford. To effect this we left Wadi-Jabes to the south, and after proceeding for some time in a northerly direction, we struck off into a wadi running parallel to the Wadi-Jabes, which led us, after much climbing, to the first and second mountain plateaux of this eastern district. We thus forsook Wadi-Jabes, in the higher part of which I should expect to find the site of the ancient capital. Though unproductive of actual result, our expedition was far from being uninteresting. The height to which we ascended gave me a good opportunity for taking measurements; the character of the land and climate, strikingly different from that of the

western side; the large and thickly scattered oak-trees, not the common species of Palestine, with the small thorny leaf, but having a broad and large leaf, like the oaks of our own country; the new flowers, the cool temperature,—all combined to give delight and interest, apart from the villages and ruins which we saw either near or at a distance. Among the latter was the castle of Rebah, Rebad, or Rebab, which, being built upon a high rock, is seen at a great distance, and to great advantage.

Kefr-abîl we reached at half-past ten. This is, I believe, an ancient site. It is situated not less than two thousand feet above the level of the Jordan, on a plateau which rises a thousand feet more toward the east, with a gentle slope clothed with verdure, and studded with oaks and other trees. I greatly desired that I might have some opportunity of repeating my visit to this part of Israel's land. The surrounding mountains precluded any distant view. Kâlat Rebab, and the villages of Jedeidah, Kefr-idis, and Kefr-awan, were the only points of interest in the neighbourhood of Kefr-abîl visible. And what was the name of the city to which the ancient stones and olive-presses of Kefr-abîl belonged? I cannot tell, not finding in Scripture any Abel to which this corresponds.

The conscription, which has agitated the whole country, had also produced its effects here. The inhabitants of Kefr-abîl were gone, with the exception of a few women, and two or three old men. The latter took courage to approach us when they saw us quietly seated at breakfast under an olive-tree, unlike people coming to make a conscription. The present

of a handful of tobacco put them in a good humour, and we learned from them all that was remarkable in the neighbourhood. It was they who told us that there are no ruins in Wadi-Jabes which bear the name of Jabes. "The only ruins," said one of these shechs, "which are to be found in that wadi, are Machlûf and ed-Deir." The name of the first was given unto it because of its overthrow by an earthquake, "Machlûf" signifying overthrow. The latter lies on the road between Jerash (Gerasa) and Beisan. He pointed with his finger in the direction of these places, telling us, at the same time, that among the ruins of ed-Deir were columns and other remains of buildings of magnificence. We felt great desire to visit these places, but as the one lay at the distance of two, and the other of three miles, we could not manage it. We had yet to return to the Jordan, and to reach Beisan, which would occupy at least five hours and a half. Dr Robinson regretted it exceedingly, having come for the express purpose of seeking Jabesh, and believing that there was sufficient evidence for identifying ed-Deir with that city.

We returned to the Jordan by a narrow valley inclining toward the north-west. This valley also was richly studded with oak-trees. From the information given us by the shechs of Kefr-abîl, we had come to the conclusion that the large ruins now called Tûbakat-fahel were, indeed, the remains of the ancient Pella. This spot was first visited by Irby and Mangles in 1817, then mentioned by Kiepert, as probably identical with Pella, in his map of Palestine, 1842. As we rode along, we cast eagle glances in every direc-

tion, to discover, if possible, any ruins of which the natives might have been ignorant; but there were none. Once we maintained, in opposition to our guides, that we saw ruins on the top of a hill to our left; but when we ascended in order to decide the point, we found that what had appeared at a distance as hewn stones and pieces of walls, was only the stratified formation of natural rock. The traveller in Palestine is continually liable to mistake rocks for ruins, and again, he may easily pass by ruins without perceiving them. On rounding a hill, we saw the ruins of Pella at half an hour's distance to the south, and at once bent our steps toward them. We found ourselves among the veritable remains of an ancient and important city. Not only are large stones scattered about, but portions of the walls are still standing, and the line of streets is here and there traceable. The city has been built on a kind of large terrace, at a height, I should think, of not less than six hundred feet above the level of the Jordan. Towards the north, west, and south, the hill slopes precipitously, on which sides ascent is impracticable; but the north-east, east, and south-east parts of the terrace connect it with still higher plateaux. At the foot of the hill, on the south-eastern side, is a fountain of such copiousness as to shew it at once to be the famous fountain of Pella, spoken of by ancient authors. The existence of this fountain corroborates the testimony derived from other sources. According to Dapper, Seleucus, king of Syria, was the founder of Pella; but it seems to have been Philip and Alexander of Macedon who raised it to the dignity of a royal residence, bestowing on it the name

of the Macedonian capital. The rich fountain adjoining each of those towns, seems to have been the associating idea.* Near this fountain, which is called by the Bedouïns of the place ed-Djirm, we saw two columns still standing erect, the remains of a temple, for the site of which a more charming spot could not have been selected. The waters of the fountain still retain this peculiarity, that they hold in solution a great quantity of lime, which deposits itself on the objects over which the stream flows, forming incrustations which, in process of time, accumulate into even large masses of rock. I observed the substance thus formed among the building material in the walls of houses; it had been hewn into quadrangular blocks. Many of the streams of Palestine are of the same character; among the rest, especially those of Ras-el-'ain (near Tyre) and Bûrj-al-Ferra'.

Historians tell us that Pella was for a long time inhabited by Macedonians, chiefly followers of Alexander, whom he left on his way to the interior of Asia. The Jews, under their king, Alexander Janneus, rose against the heathen colonists, and destroyed the city. It was again built, and afterwards taken by Pompey. During the wars between the Jews and the Romans, this city, then the capital of a district, was again and again captured by the Jews, and had its fortifications razed. At the time, however, of the siege of Jerusalem, Pella must have been well fortified, for Eusebius informs us that the Christians in Jerusalem, remembering the warning word of their Lord, (Luke xxi. 20, 21), took advantage of a short cessa-

* See Halma's *Woordenboek van Canaän.* Leeuwarden, 1717.

tion of hostilities to leave the city, and fled hither for refuge. Pella is thus endeared to us as the hiding-place of the Church of Christ during the time of the desolation prophesied by Daniel. How many prayers and thanksgivings must have then ascended from this spot! These circumstances made our discovery very valuable to me. I could not, however, but regret the haste of my fellow-travellers, which prevented me from making so thorough an examination of the ruins as I could have wished. I was, from the same cause, also unable to take a sketch of the scene, by the help of which you might have formed a correct idea of the situation of Pella. All that I possess as memorials of my visit are a few pieces of Mosaic pavement, some fragments of Roman pottery, and a piece of the calcareous deposit. Dr Smith, while wandering in another part of the ruins, found a piece of tombstone with a Greek inscription, probably a monument of the time when the Church of Pella was ruled by its own bishop. The spot was so attractive to me, as well as the view of the surrounding country so charming, that I had great difficulty in tearing myself away from it. The prospect from Pella is wide and extensive, embracing many of the most interesting places mentioned in Holy Writ. In the foreground, at my feet, was the Jordan flowing through its woods of tamarisks. On the other side rose gently the plain of Beisan, surmounted by the high tell of that name. In the distance were the mountains of Gilboa, the whole stretch of which is seen, even as far as ancient Jezreel. Opposite this, to the north, rises a mountain ridge, on one of the highest points of which stands the village of Kaukab. This conceals, in

a great measure, the other hills of Galilee. Little Hermon, however, peers above the ridge, and is rendered conspicuous by a whitened weli, which stands on its summit. Between Gilboa and Kaukab the eye wanders over the wide plain of Jezreel, till it rests upon the faint blue cliffs of el-Mohhraka, which form its western boundary. This is the part of Carmel where, a few months ago, I visited the site of Elijah's sacrifice.

Leaving the ruins of Pella (Tûbakat-fahel), we made straight for the Jordan, which we reached in an hour and ten minutes, but at a part of its course where the water was too deep for fording. The guides conducted us to a place a little lower down, but even here it seemed too hazardous to attempt it. "Will you give us an extra baksheesh, and we will try it?" said one of the guides. We at once agreed, as the saving of a long detour by the place where we crossed in the morning, was worth a few piastres. The Bedouïns now led us singly by the bridle, and we all reached the western bank in safety, the only inconvenience being the wetting of our saddle-bags and part of our dresses. "I have taken many fords in the United States," said Dr Robinson, "but never one so deep as this." Beisan we reached in an hour and a quarter after fording the river. In estimating the amount of space passed over by the time which we took in making this tour, you must take into account an increase of speed above that of my former travels—for I was now travelling with companions—and Dr Smith, who generally took the lead, was mounted on a pony which had a sharp trot, with which we found it difficult to keep up. We were thus always in a hurry.

Our tents were already pitched among the ruins of the city of the Scythians (Scythopolis), for so Beth-shan was called for many centuries, until the old name re-appeared under the Arabic form of Beisan. It seemed as if our careless servants had chosen the worst place for encampment which they could have found. It was an open field which had only recently been tenanted by a herd of cattle, so that you may imagine the condition of the ground, a plot truly swarming with horrible spiders, flies, and earwigs. I am sure that if you saw our quarters you would not envy us our stay here from Saturday afternoon till Monday morning. Then think of our weariness after such heavy travelling for successive days; this last day's tour to Kefr-abîl had kept us in saddle for thirteen hours, and our path had not been over a level plain, but alternating between steep ascents and descents, which made the motion the more fatiguing. This discomfort we all experienced in common, but it was my lot alone to be in constant and acute pain, from the same cause that I had formerly suffered from, and which had returned on leaving Jericho. Though I did not tell you of my suffering when in the glowing Ghor at Fasaël and Kerawa, you must see how the terrible heat would aggravate my complaint. Still, I ought to be thankful that amid so many trials and difficulties I have been able to carry my purpose into effect, and have been brought as far as this. Sometimes, at the close of my day's journey, I lie down on my carpet quite exhausted, and fancy that I shall never be able to complete my arduous task; but when at such times I realise so vividly my weakness and helplessness, I am driven to urgent prayer for

assistance from Him who alone can give it, and who never refuses it; and often this is followed by refreshing sleep, from which I awake with an encouraged spirit, as well as with renewed strength for my journey. How forcibly have I been taught the truth of what Paul says in 2 Cor. xii. 10, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Surely, if I shall be able to bring to a satisfactory close my labours in Palestine, and if these labours shall be productive of any beneficial result, it is not to me, but to God, that the honour must be ascribed. To have my eye continually directed upwards gives me great strength and fortitude, and though my spirit is sometimes depressed by the weariness of my body and the many difficulties and trials I have to encounter, yet I have a continual source of joy and comfort in the assurances I receive that God is ever at my right hand, directing and blessing me in all my ways, even above what I ask or think. Thus, for instance, in my being united in this excursion with my fellow-travellers; possibly I might have wished to accomplish the journey more leisurely, and have sought more opportunities for obtaining information, instead of being hurried, sometimes very much against my will; but, while I have seen from this the many advantages of my solitary travelling, which I used to mourn over, at the same time the size of our combined caravan renders us secure against the molestation of the Bedouïns, from whom I would perhaps have received very different treatment had I been alone; and our intercourse during these four days has been marked by very interesting conversations, and a free exchange of opinion with regard to the objects of our search.

These conversations, too, have clearly convinced me that, though the combination of the results of my travels with those of Dr Robinson's might be possible, such a plan would be attended with innumerable difficulties.

My mind has been occupied this morning with meditation on what I have already accomplished, and on what still lies before me. I remembered that Beth-shan signifies "house of rest," and as this is the day of rest, I thought that I would make Beisan to be indeed to me a place of rest. You will ask why this name was given to this town. I suppose it was because of the convenience of the situation as a resting-place for caravans going between Syria or Midian and Egypt. Beth-shan was the great station for the commerce between these countries during many centuries; all that now remains to bear witness to this fact is a ruin to the north of Beisan, which is believed to have been the khan or caravansera where the merchants rested themselves and their camels. We also see the importance of Beth-shan from the mention made of it in Scripture. It was a town in the lot that fell to Issachar, but was given to Manasseh, who, however, in this as in other instances, failed to dislodge the inhabitants.* The Canaanites who dwelt here were strong, and had chariots of iron, while the children of Manasseh were faint-hearted and of little faith. It is not till the time of Solomon that we find the whole district of Beth-shan subdued, at which time it was under the government of Baanah, the son of Ahilud.†

Beisan has been visited but by few travellers. Burk-

* Joshua xvii. 11, 12, 16–18; Judges i. 27; 1 Chron. vii. 29.
† 1 Kings iv. 12.

hardt gives a somewhat imperfect sketch of the town and district. Irby and Mangles, De Bertou and Molyneux, enter a little more into detail. A nice etching of the Acropolis was the result of Tipping's visit, mentioned by Dr Traill in his edition of the *Jewish Wars of Josephus;* but fatigue and the troublesome Bedouins prevented him from satisfactorily examining the ruins. Perhaps a few words upon Beisan may not be unacceptable to you.

The ruins of Beisan are among the most extensive in Palestine. Portions of walls and remains of buildings of all kinds cover a very large area, the Acropolis being within the area, not in the centre, however, but to the north. This is a hill of not less than 300 feet in height, on which stood the fortress that protected the town beneath. I walked round this tell and found many fragments of the wall still standing. There still exists a gate near the top on the north-west side. Finding a richly ornamented capital of a Corinthian column inserted among the other material in a portion of the wall, I inferred that these were ruins of a castle which had risen from the ruins of a citadel of still earlier date. From this Tell is obtained a view of a great part of the valley of Jezreel, the mountains of Gilboa, Kaukab, and little Hermon, while a part of the Ghor is also seen with its splendid stream, and on the other side the wooded hills of Bashan and Gilead. But it is not only the distant view and its important and picturesque character that makes the ascent of this tell desirable; you enjoy from it a bird's-eye view of the interesting relics of antiquity contained among the ruins of the city. These numerous columns

everywhere scattered about demand the scientific skill of the archæologist to call again into fancied being the buildings of which once they were so prominent a part. In one place nine truncated columns stand erect, all apparently having belonged to the same building. These ruins testify to the truth of what is stated by Eusebius and Jerome, that Beth-shan was in their time the finest city of the whole Decapolis, it being the only one of the ten on the west side of the Jordan. To the north-east of the tell is another elevation, separated by a ravine through which one of the four brooks which water the plain of Beisan wends its way to the Jordan. The Acropolis is in a manner insulated, being surrounded by two of those streams; over the one on the north side is a bridge of Roman architecture, which seems to have been the principal entrance to the castle; the remains of a gate, too, are still visible. On the opposite hill are also ruins, and sepulchral caves, in some of which Irby and Mangles found sarcophagi. I did not visit these. After my inspection of the tell, I went with Dr Robinson to examine the ruins lying round its base. Of all that is to be seen here the amphitheatre is unquestionaby the most interesting object. It has been built, as well as the whole city, of a dark coloured trap. Captain Irby found its longer diameter to measure 180 feet. During the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Julian many suffered martyrdom in this amphitheatre (359 A.D.) In one of the vomitories the above-mentioned traveller found twenty human skulls. No such relics came under our notice. How important that excavations should be made in a place of so much

historical interest! But in order to prosecute this undertaking the protection of a considerable force would be necessary, as Beisan is noted for the avarice and lawlessness of the Bedouïns, from whom peaceful antiquarians must expect every annoyance. The present village of Beisan lies at a distance of 400 yards from the foot of the tell. It contains the ruins of a castle of a quadrangular form, and provided with a tower. Near it is our encampment, close by a brook, and among the few families which inhabit the mouldering huts. My Nablous guide told me that these were Egyptian Bedouïns, which still preserves to Beisan the foreign character that had formerly belonged to it when known by the name of Scythopolis. For particulars regarding the origin of the name Scythopolis, I must refer you to Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. xv. p. 432, where the learned geographer tells us that ancient writers have mentioned an invasion of the Scythians in the time of Josiah, which resulted in the establishment of a barbarian colony in Beth-shan. In the book of Judith iii. 11, and 2 Maccabees xii. 30, the city is mentioned under the name of Scythopolis. William of Tyre informs us that this was the seat of the Archbishop of Palestina-Secunda, the fortifications of the town having been repaired by Gabinius, as Josephus informs us, when the Roman power was dominant. In the year 1182 Saladin suffered a check before its walls, and when he took it in the following year, he razed it to the ground. The seat of the archbishoprick was in consequence transferred to Nazareth, and Beisan has continued to exhibit ever since the heaps of ruins through which we have been wandering. Nature has

not withdrawn her capacities, but as the hand of cultivation is wanting, her gifts are not improved as they formerly were. The palm groves of Beisan, of which the ancients speak in glowing terms, have entirely disappeared, the gardens and indigo fields are no more, and the streams which once were turned to good account, now confined to no prescribed channel, overrun the country, turning into a marshy fen what has been and may yet again become a very paradise. Here and there one sees the conduits of former mills, but the wheel is no more active, and the water has formed a large incrustation of lime along the edges of its bed. Indeed, I viewed the scene in silent astonishment, knowing the amount of good which so much water might effect. It appears from Joshua xvii. 14–18, that the country around Beth-shan was covered with a fine forest; and where is this now? Not a shrub remains large enough to afford shade to the weary traveller. In other parts of the land where the scarcity of water is great, the Fellah labours in the sweat of his brow, working with pickaxe and plough among the arid rocks, and cultivates as much ground as will afford him a scanty subsistence. In such places it is the want of water which is felt as a. curse; but here is water in abundance, and yet unproductive of good, for the savage and ruthless Bedouïn hordes which infest the region suffer no peaceful labourer to find so much as a resting-place for the sole of his foot. You will ask if steps could not be taken by the Turkish government for the suppression of robbery and the establishment of security in the land. Ah! my friend, any other power would long ere now have exerted itself to

effect this, but what can be expected from a government so weak and unjust as that of Turkey? In this consists the deplorable condition of this once highly favoured land; having first been desolated, it has then been brought under the deadening arm of a Mohammedan power, that recovery might be impossible. Shall it be always so? Only till the time to favour Zion, the set time, is come, when the Lord shall arise and have mercy upon His people and on their land. Then shall His arm be stretched forth to bring again the captivity of His people, bringing them out of all lands whither they have been scattered, "that the whole earth may know that He is the Lord." The truth of God's Word as regards this land is brought vividly before me, and many a silent prayer is breathed from my heart that Christians who have the opportunity may be led to come here that they may witness what the Lord has wrought. Much has been written, and still continues to be written, concerning Palestine, but it is one thing to read a book, too often merely a compilation from other books, and another to enter upon a personal inquiry into the matter. This would produce very different impressions, and lead to different results. Were Christians to visit this land, it would lead them to take a far deeper interest in Palestine and its heirs; it would make them to bear these more frequently on their spirits before the God of all grace. If the Lord's people became followers of Paul* in praying for the salvation of Israel, such a manifestation of love could not be long resisted by the objects of it; the prayers of the latter would soon begin to ascend together with

* Romans x. 1.

those of the Christian; and we know that God has promised deliverance in connexion with humiliation and prayer, but not in any other way.

Our Sabbath in "the house of rest," has passed very quietly. I do not think that the Bedouïns expected us to make so long a halt among them when they saw us arrive last night from Pella, and we on our part took good care to keep them in the dark, fearing that they would not let pass so good an opportunity for inspecting our baggage. We had a visit from several in the course of the day, who had been attracted from a distance by our tents; whether their intentions were of the Bedouïn cast I cannot tell, but certainly I found Dr Smith invaluable, being as well acquainted with their language and manners as they themselves, which seemed at once to conciliate their favour for us. They did not even clamour for baksheesh, and I have reason to be thankful that much dreaded Beisan became thus a safe resting-place, where we spent the Lord's-day in great tranquillity. I had, moreover, the privilege of uniting with my respected companions in reading and meditation. If you can realise to yourself the mental distraction caused by spending many successive days in travelling, even though it be in Palestine, and being every day for ten or twelve hours, or even more, on horseback, you will be able to enter into the feelings with which I regarded this privilege of communion with my Christian fellow-travellers.

And now, my dear friend, for to-day farewell! I had much to write, having been prevented for some days by excessive fatigue from making my daily jottings, but now I have given you all my news, so that

my mind is relieved. Accept my sincere wishes, and believe me, &c.

NAZARETH, 19*th May*.

With the commencement of another week, I entered on another phase of my travels. From the *terra incognita* I now turned to what is already known, from the unexplored Ghor to the great pilgrim road through the middle of the land. Our first intention had been to take a cross course right over the Gilboa mountains, this being a region which has not been thoroughly explored, except by the late Dr Schultz. But we had to abandon this plan, both from want of time, and want of a guide. Our chayal of Nablous was unacquainted with these parts, and not even the offer of a large baksheesh was sufficient to induce any of the lazy Bedouïns to undertake the task. Dr Smith and Dr Robinson accordingly fixed upon the Lake of Galilee, while my route seemed to me to lie in the direction of Jezreel and Nazareth. We rode together, however, for a couple of hours, leaving the high road from Beisan to Jezreel on the right, and going across the plain toward the foot of the Gilboa mountains. Our object was to find the ruins of Beit-ilfa, which had been mentioned by Dr Schultz as the probable site of Bethulia.* The people at Beisan had shewn us the place in the distance, and we had to clear a way for

* See Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. xv. p. 423. In a former letter I have stated my opinion with regard to the position of Bethulia. I would feel disposed to identify Beit-ilfa with Beth-leptephene or Betholine, the capital of a district to the west of the Jordan. (See Halma, *Woordenboek van Kanaan*, under article Pella.) The description which Dr Schultz gives of the ruins of Beit-ilfa, is so at variance with the character

ourselves through the marshy plain, which besides was overgrown with thistles. An hour and ten minutes after leaving Beisan, we passed by a large tell, but had no means of ascertaining its name. Beit-ilfa it could not be, as that was to be sought for further on. We found nothing that had the appearance of ruins, which led my fellow-travellers to suppose that they were to be sought for at the immediate foot of the mountain. They accordingly took a foot-path leading over higher ground, while I kept on in the plain among the thistles, and soon found myself on the spot we were in search of. The ruins which I found consisted only of hewn stones in great abundance, and they were so entirely concealed by grass and weeds, that no one could have detected them, unless previously acquainted with their position, or happening to stumble upon them as I did. I shouted to my friends at the pitch of my voice; they turned round and joined me, coming to the same conclusion as myself that these were the only ruins to be found on this side of the Gilboa mountains.

"Have you found nothing on the spot where you were standing when I called you?" I asked my companions.

"Nothing but two fragments of a sarcophagus."

Shortly after we parted company, with sincere wishes for each other's comfort and protection for the remainder of our journeys. They took the road leading in a north-north-westerly direction, toward Kûmieh, while I endeavoured to extricate myself from the mass

of the place which I believe to be Beit-ilfa, that it is evident that he has received quite different information from the natives regarding its situation.

of thistles, and to gain the high road to Jezreel, or, as the Arabians call it, Zer'în, or sometimes Zer'aîn. I caught a last glimpse of them as they stood on a tell, while I myself was standing on another measuring angles between Beit-ilfa and the great fountain of Goliah ('Ain-jâlûd). The people ploughing in the neighbourhood gave me "Shech-Hasan," as the name of the tell on which I stood, and a rich fountain on the west side of it, used for irrigating the land, they called "'Ain-arihan." A fine group of trees grew around the fountain.

The fountain of Jâlûd is well known, being generally visited by those who pass through Zer'în. It is the chief source of the waters of Beisan, the largest of these streams bearing the name of Jâlûd. From whence the name Jâlûd or Goliah has come I know not, unless it be from the erroneous idea that this was the scene of David's encounter with the giant of Gath. If such be the record of tradition, it is only one of the many instances in which monkish legends are in antagonism to Holy Writ. It seems to me probable that this was the fountain spoken of as "being in Jezreel," at which Israel lay encamped when the Philistines had pitched near Aphek.* On the day before the fatal battle, the Philistines were in Shunem, now called Sûlem, at the distance of an hour to the north of Zer'în. Saul was on the heights of Gilboa, and "when he saw the host of the Philistines he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not" (1 Sam. xxviii. 5, 6). Then he had recourse to "wizards and those that had familiar spirits," concerning whom the Lord had so posi-

* 1 Sam. xxix. 1.

tively commanded that they should not be in Israel." "In Endor," said his servants, "there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit." The King of Israel disguises himself, and, concealed by the shades of evening, steals down the mountain, crosses the eastern ridge of Little Hermòn, and comes to Endor, which lies at its foot on the north-east side. It is in this manner that he avoids the camp of the enemy. The result of his interview with the witch we know. Exhausted by fasting, anxiety, and agony of conscience, he fell on the earth, and there was no strength in him. The woman prevailed upon him to eat, setting before him the best that she had; and Saul and his servants did eat, and rose up and went away that night. The thirty-first chapter of 1 Samuel relates the end of the unhappy man who had turned away from the Lord. "So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men that same day together," ver. 6. "And the men of Israel fled, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa." "And the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them," ver. 7. The mountains of Gilboa seem yet to lie under the curse uttered by David in his lamentation,* for the north side, the side on which "the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away," and where "the beauty of Israel was slain," presents a more barren appearance than is almost to be found in the land.

In former and better times a large reservoir was constructed at the fountain of Jezreel. Some pieces of its old wall still remain, forming part of the en-

* 2 Sam. i. 21.

closure of the present pool, which now-a-days, too, is of great value in the eyes of travellers, as they can here refresh both themselves and their horses and mules. No wonder, then, that I found a great concourse of people, horses, camels, and asses, collected at the fountain. No wonder either that I found myself in the midst of fields luxuriant with corn, and promising an abundant harvest—a blessing resulting from the waters of 'Ain-Jâlûd. Zer'aîn, or Zer'în, I reached by the old highway from the fountain to the village, probably the very road by which the avenging Jehu entered Jezreel coming from Ramoth-Gilead, Jehoram being in Jezreel sick of the wounds which he had received from the Syrians. By this road also Saladin came from the country beyond Jordan to storm Jezreel, wishing by the taking of this city to effect a lodgment in the heart of the land, which was then in the hands of the Crusaders. Zer'aîn is now an insignificant hamlet. Half of it lies in ruins, and over the rubbish the prickly pear, with its fine yellow flowers and carmine-coloured fruit, spreads its thorny twigs, as if to cover Jezreel's tomb. The village stands on an isolated rock, which may be said to be the most northern projection of Gilboa. There is no spot in the whole extent of the plain which offers so wide a view as this rock. From this point are seen Carmel and the mountains of Nazareth, little Hermon and the hills of Bashan and Gilead, the heights of Gilboa and the lofty ridges of Shechem and Samaria, as also the villages of the plain from Jenîn to el-Lejjûn, and from Shunem to Beisan. How clear was the view of the plain sloping towards Beisan, and how distinct its undulations in

the northern and north-western direction! I almost fancied myself a watchman standing on the tower of Jezreel, like him of old who spied the company of Jehu, while yet far from the city. The tower where he watched was probably built on the summit of this rock. There still stands a building somewhat like a tower, the house of the Shech of the village, from the roof of which I took my measurements. My eye therefore must have rested on the same natural objects, the same mountains and valleys, as did that of the watchman. Had you been with me, you would have joined me in allowing that Ahab certainly chose the best possible place for his royal residence.

The parcel of ground which has given to Jezreel such a bloody celebrity is not known. I refer to the vineyard of Naboth. However, in reading attentively 1 Kings xxi., in connexion with 2 Kings ix., it seems possible to determine with some degree of certainty its position. According to 1 Kings xxi. 1, the vineyard was "*in* Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab," who wished to have it for a garden of herbs, because it was near unto his house (ver. 2). In 2 Kings ix. 21 we read that Joram and Ahaziah made ready and drove out to meet Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. Jehu came from Beisan; therefore the blood-bought vineyard must have been on the eastern slope of the rock of Zer'în, close by the highway, that same road by which I had come from 'Ain-jâlûd. A terrible vengeance it was which Jehu executed upon the house of Ahab; but "there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his

wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel" (1 Kings xxi. 25, 26). Nevertheless, so great is the mercy of God, "the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?" His repentance was not lasting, yet the Lord regarded it: "Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house" (ver. 27–29).

Through what interesting localities did this day's journey lead me! Through the Great plain to Jezreel, that city of blood, from thence to the peaceful Shunem, with which such delightful associations are connected. —(2 Kings iv.) Often have I pictured to myself the pious believing Shunammite, "a great woman," as she is called, v. 8, a woman full of love to the prophet of the Lord, and of faith in the word spoken in the Lord's name. And now, when crossing the plain beneath the burning noon-day sun, how vividly could I realize the case of the youth who went out to his father among the reapers, and who was struck by the fierce rays of that sun! Then see his mother holding him in her arms as he was dying, and her heroic faith in concealing his death from her husband; then her anxious journey, as she had to ride for five or six hours to reach yonder blue mountain-top of Carmel; hear her "It is well" to Gehazi, while she stops not in her ascent of the steep mountain till she reaches Elijah's feet, at which she falls and disburdens her heavy-laden spirit. Oh, how great is a mother's love! and how wonderful

and adorable are the ways of God! The Shunammite had not sought a son from the prophet; her child is in every respect the free gift of God. Has she, then, been allowed to rejoice for a little in this dear child, only that she should afterwards perish with sorrow on beholding its corpse? Is this the reward for all her kindness to the messenger of the Lord? Begone, unbelief! the sorrow is but for a moment; soon shall greater joy be her portion—joy not only in the restoration of her child, but in the assurance of His favour who has dealt so mercifully with her. This was done "that the works of God should be made manifest in him," and "for the glory of God." *

Sûlem is still a considerable village; it lies at the south-western base of Little Hermon. Under the shade of its pomegranate and fig trees I refreshed myself with a cooling draught of water, and then rode on over the foot of the hill. No sooner does the traveller reach the northern slope than another vast stretch of plain lies before him. Till then it is hidden by the ridge of Little Hermon, which divides the great plain into two parts, the northern part being bounded by Mount Tabor, and the southern by the mountains of Gilboa. From Little Hermon to Carmel the plain is wholly unbroken by mountains. To the north of Little Hermon, or, as the Arabs call it, Jebel-Dahy, there lies another, though much smaller, ridge, which again divides the northern part into two; and if we include as parts of the great plain the side valleys which slope toward the Jordan on the south of Jezreel, the broad valley between the mountains of

* John ix. 3; xi. 4; compare ver. 40.

Gilboa and those of Samaria must be considered as a considerable part of the plain. But I must not enlarge at present on the geography of the country. Let me rather conduct you across the plain to Tabor, which I wish to ascend *en passant*. For this I had to sacrifice a visit to Nain, now called Nein, and to Endor, which both lay immediately to our right when at the northern foot of Jebel-Dahy. But I find the distant views of mountains in this land even more deceptive than elsewhere. Owing to the clearness of the atmosphere, I imagined the distance of Mount Tabor to be much less than it really was. It was half-past three when we reached the village of Debûri, at the foot of the mount, on its western side. Nazareth was yet at a distance of two hours, and the ascent and descent of Tabor would have occupied fully two hours, without giving us any time to stay on the top. I was therefore obliged to give up the project, and could not even linger in the picturesque Debûri, which is thought to be Dobrath, one of the Levitical cities of Issachar,* and also the village in which our Saviour, after his transfiguration, performed the miracle on the young man possessed of the devil, which his disciples could not cast out.† As regards this latter fact, I cannot vouch for its correctness, but it seems to me that if Mount Tabor were indeed the scene of Christ's transfiguration, Debûri was probably the place where the miraculous cure was effected, the ascent being generally made from this spot.

From this village a path winds upwards among rocks in the dry bed of a wadi, in a north-westerly direction.

* Joshua xxi. 28. † Matt. xvii. 14–21; Mark ix. 16–29; Luke ix. 37–43.

The traveller, wearied by the hot sun in the plain, is now refreshed by the shade of trees, whilst the sun also begins to sink. As he ascends, the air is cooler, and numerous birds cheer him with their songs. Let him not, however, forget to stop occasionally, and look back to Mount Tabor, for it is from this mountain path that Tabor's conical height and luxuriant verdure are seen to greatest advantage, especially when lighted up by the setting sun. When I first saw Mount Tabor, on my way from Shûnem, I was disappointed. The mountain on the south side has little vegetation, and neither does its form nor its general appearance excite admiration; but as soon as I got to the westward of it, I beheld it in all its splendour and sublimity as a hero and king among the mountains. The views of Mount Tabor given in so many books on Palestine are all taken from the wooded slopes on the way to Nazareth. Tabor at length disappears, as the path winds through rocky chasms. An hour and a half were now gone since we left Debûri, pursuing an almost trackless path among the rocks, and yet Nazareth was not in sight. I was assured by some shepherds that we were on the right road. My mind, therefore, was at rest on this point; how then . . . . . but all at once, on rounding a rocky hill, the picturesque valley of Nazareth burst full upon my view, as it lay beneath, with its gardens, mountain slopes, valleys, churches, and convents, with its crowd of natives, monks, and travellers, and above all, with the associations connected with Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. . . . . .

Should I pitch my tent under these olive-trees to the east of the village, beside the Greek Church? I was

still undecided, when I met two friends, who altered my plans. One of them was Mr Klein, of the Church Missionary Society, who insisted that I should take up my quarters at his house; and who, think you, was the other? My good German theologist, who had been escorted by my English friends from Nablous to Carmel, and thence to Nazareth, where he was handed over to the care of Mr Klein, while they themselves, after a short stay in Nazareth, pursued their journey to Damascus.

"And how have you got on since we parted at Nablous?" I asked.

"Ah! my dear friend," said he, "I see more and more every day how good was the advice you gave me before we separated, though at that time I did not know its value. This is indeed a terrible land; there is no pleasure in travelling among such a set of robbers; and then without a servant or a dragoman—who could stand this? The very day I left you my life was in danger. The two English travellers had gone on while I was gathering plants, when, hastening after them, I had the misfortune to strike into a wrong path, in pursuing which darkness overtook me, not knowing where I was, or in what direction to turn. For about an hour I continued in the utmost anxiety. At last I heard some one calling my name, and soon distinguished the voice of Mr T., who had taken this means of finding out where I was. I felt it indeed a wonder when I found myself at safety that night under a tent."

"And may I ask what are your plans for the future, after this experience?"

"Why, to return as soon as possible by the coast

road, *via* 'Akka to Beirût, and to go on board the first steamer. Mr Klein will kindly send his servant with me. After all, I shall be able to say, on departure, that I have seen the principal places of interest in Palestine—Jerusalem and its environs, Shechem, Samaria, Carmel, the Lake of Tiberias, Nazareth, 'Akka, Tyre, and Sidon—a pleasure which I highly prize, and for which I desire to be thankful."

And now I am in Nazareth. Can you realise it? I cannot. I ask myself why; it is perhaps in consequence of my having formed expectations too high; for though the Lord is ever teaching us to put no dependence on an ever-varying religion of frames and feelings, yet we are prone to imagine that on such sacred spots as this and others our hearts must be exercised in a very peculiar manner; and of course we meet with disappointment. The disappointment, however, may be very useful. But you must not misunderstand me. I do not mean that on visiting Nazareth we must feel insensible to the unfathomable love which moved the Saviour to spend the greater part of his life in this despised town; I allow that the sight of these mountains and valleys, which were so well known to Jesus, and so long frequented by Him, is calculated to impress the mind very deeply with a sense of the lowly and self-denying love of the Son of God, and also that there is a peculiar solemnity about the spots where we know that Jesus walked, where he came to pray, where he taught, and healed all manner of diseases. What I contend against is, the disposition to estimate the amount of spiritual life by the greater or less intensity of feeling produced by such scenes and associations.

And this seems to me to be the great danger in visiting holy places. We are ready to put confidence in our exercise of mind, transient though it be, as a ground of salvation; or, in other words, we value our sensibility as a proof that we have found mercy in the sight of God through Jesus Christ. Not so are the glad tidings of the Gospel; from it we learn that full pardon of sin, reconciliation to the Holy God, and eternal life are offered to us *freely*, as gifts purchased by Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God. If, then, all our salvation, from beginning to end, has been wrought out by Jesus, who was given by the Father in the greatness of His love, what has man to do further than accept the blessing, and what greater dishonour can we be guilty of than in doubting the sufficiency of Christ, either in love or in power, to save to the uttermost all who put their trust in Him? Let the Word of God be the test by which we try the certainty of our salvation, and not the degree of the impression produced by our visiting a spot, be it even the holiest upon earth.

This is my third day at Nazareth, still under the hospitable roof of the missionary. The mukhari whom I had brought from Jerusalem wished to return, and I had no special reason for detaining him. This has obliged me to send to Signor d'A. Finzi at 'Akka to procure other mules, and if possible another servant; for Theodori, who is quite unaccustomed to such active life, gives me excessive annoyance by his laziness and unfitness for the work. Wherever we pitch our tent he is sure to leave something behind when packing up his goods and chattels, and if this were to last much

longer, I should soon be without utensils for cooking my dinner. I am sorry to say that the mules and their mukhari arrived this morning, but no servant, the vice-consul assuring me in a letter that no servants fit for European travellers are to be had at 'Akka. I must therefore, "*bon gré mal gré*," be content with Theodori.

The short rest I have enjoyed here was quite necessary for me. It is when I come to any resting-place that I become fully aware of the exhausting effects of such long-continued travelling, accompanied as it is with so many difficulties, dangers, and discomforts, and with such constant straining of the mind. How refreshing under such circumstances is the hospitality of a Christian brother! and how great the kindness of God in giving me to experience it in this place! It is the watchful care of the Keeper of Israel, who never slumbers nor sleeps, that strengthens me in my weakness, and raises me when ready to sink in despondency. By remaining for a short time in this charming place, I have been able to walk all round the valley, and on the adjacent slopes, as well as to make a pretty accurate sketch of the village, from which you may comprehend its situation at the base, and partly against the slope of a hill, while it is flanked by lower elevations. As to the legends of Nazareth, I pass them by in silence. I have only visited one of the traditional sights—the Greek Church, where they shew under the high altar the fountain near where the Virgin Mary was saluted by the angel Gabriel. You know that the Roman Catholic Church declares the scene of the salutation to be a grotto, above which a convent has been erected. I

saw enough in the Greek Church to make me disinclined to visit the Latin; no more did I visit the other grotto, which is given out to be the house of Joseph and Mary, and where they are impudent enough to shew a stone as the table of the holy family. How stupidly tradition blunders may be seen from this: the monks point out as the scene of the so-called Precipitation* the side of a hill on which is a precipice overhanging the "Great plain." This hill is at the distance of an hour's walk from Nazareth, whereas Scripture speaks of the place as "the brow of the hill whereon their city was built." Where it is to be sought for, I cannot tell. My sketch will shew you that Nazareth is not now built on the brow of a hill, but at the bottom of its slope. The Maronites, who have also a little church in Nazareth, built at the foot of a rock which rises perpendicularly to the height of thirty or forty feet, pretend that this is the spot in dispute. It is, however, far too insignificant for Scripture to style it "the hill on which the city was built." If you ask my opinion, I must confess my inability to explain the matter; I only conjecture that Nazareth may have been built partly on a terrace of the hill presenting a precipitous front, and that this terrace has crumbled down, in the course of eighteen centuries, either by earthquakes, which are of common occurrence in the country, or from some other causes, so that the place where the Saviour's life was threatened has disappeared. That Nazareth has undergone a fundamental change is not to be doubted. With the exception of the an-

* Luke iv. 16, 28, 29.

cient fountains, the present village contains no relics of antiquity.

The summit of the hill above Nazareth commands one of the finest views you can imagine, a view full of interest to the student of Scripture. From Mount Carmel and the hills of Samaria to the mountains east of the Jordan, from the rocky precipices round the Lake of Tiberias to the snow-clad top of Hermon, and thence round by the northern ridges of Galilee to the shores of the Mediterranean, the panorama embraces a wide stretch of land. Dr Robinson, in his *Biblical Researches*,* has given so beautiful a description of this picture of nature, and of his feelings on the sight of it, that I deem it unnecessary to attempt to make any addition to his description, or to trouble you with my meditations, as I sat like him at the base of the Moslem weli erected on the very top of the hill to the memory of a certain Nabi Ishmael.

I now lay down my pen, as I have some matters to arrange for my tour to-morrow to the Lake of Tiberias. When I return, I shall give you the history of my excursion. Till then, farewell.

TIBERIAS, 21*st May*.

This is a day that I have long desired, a day on the shores of the Galilean Sea. I am writing these lines in my tent, which stands almost at the water's edge; it was pitched here last night, while I was upon Tabor. Early in the morning I left Nazareth, accompanied by an armed Bedouïn guide, who had been

* Vol. iii. pp. 189–191.

recommended to me by the Governor of the village as being well acquainted with the country, though I had reason to complain of his knowledge not being accurate or extensive. We rode down the valley in front of Nazareth, and reached the plain of Esdraelon by the ordinary route. As I wished to visit Nain and Endor, we crossed the plain towards Little Hermon. On arriving at Nain, which is now little more than a ruin, my attention was directed to the rock on the west side, which was full of sepulchral caves. It seems, therefore, probable that our Lord approached Nain from this side, for "when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. And there came a great fear on all; and they glorified God." *

A quarter of an hour was all the time I could afford to spend in Nain, but it was a moment of heart-cheering recollection, and up-lifting of the soul to Him whose mercies and compassions are the same to-day as eighteen hundred years ago at Nain's gates. From this I rode on to Endor, which is fully an hour's ride to the north-east; it is not visible from Nain, in consequence of intervening heights. Endor is a more considerable village, situated much in the same way as

* Luke vii. 11–16.

Nain, on the slope of a mountan. The rock on which it is built has been hollowed out by the hand of Nature into large caverns, whose dark and gloomy entrances brought involuntarily to my mind the witch of the days of Saul. It seemed as if the spirit of darkness had prepared this place for those whose deeds were "deeds of darkness." Notwithstanding the sight of camels peacefully resting in one of those caves, as in their stable, a thrill of horror passed over me as I thought of the wretched king, who had forsaken his God, and was now forsaken by Him, lying there prostrated before Samuel, whilst the cold sweat was breaking out on his anxious brow.

From Endor I crossed once more the Great plain, and again in the direction of Debûri, in order to ascend Tabor, which can be done with facility only on this side. I found, in common with other travellers, that an hour is required for the ascent, an hour amongst shrubs and trees, and over slippery rocks, where I thought more than once that my horse would have broken its legs. On the broad top, which presents an area of about two miles and a half in circumference, are the ruins of the fortified city Itabyrion, mentioned by Josephus. They are surrounded by thicket and jungle. I found in these ruins two or three Russian monks, who had chosen this place for their hermitage. Whatever comforts these good people are deprived of, they enjoy on the top of Tabor a healthy and refreshing atmosphere, good water, an excellent soil which they cultivate, a cool shade under the trees, shelter from wind and rain among the ruins, a profusion of

flowers and shrubs, especially the myrtle, the chant of birds to cheer their ears and hearts, and a most glorious view over a wide extent of ground. The Mediterranean, the Sea of Galilee, the plains of Esdraelon and Zebulon, the hills of northern and southern Galilee, Carmel, Hermon, the mountains of Samaria, and those to the east of Jordan—what can one not see from this magnificent mountain!

Fancy, it was Ascension-day when I found myself upon this memorable spot. Perhaps you will say, "I would have given anything to have been in your company;" but, my dear friend, do not envy me this privilege, for I was far from indulging in the rest of a feast-day, or pleasing myself with meditation, good and well as this may be when seasonable; no, when ascending Tabor I had a sharp conflict in making up my mind to follow implicitly my duty, which is to exert all my energies in making a good survey of the land, and for this end, if necessary, to dispense with the meditation which the spots I visit may suggest. My time was limited; I had either to make the top of Tabor a place for meditation and prayer, or to use it as a point of observation for my measurements. The first would have been full of enjoyment for myself, the last promised to be useful to others. The way of duty was thus plain, and I followed it in expectation that the Lord would perform His promise, in making the consolations of His Spirit to abound towards me, independently of site or locality. On a piece of wall at the eastern side of the top, the highest point of the hill, I placed my instrument. I could see from this

every distant object over the surrounding trees, and one of the Russian monks was so kind as to give me the names of the villages which were visible.

From my desire to spend some time in quiet meditation on the top of Tabor, you may see that I suppose this to be the "Holy Mount,"* where the Son of God was glorified in the presence of his three chosen disciples.† My only grounds, however, for this supposition, are the existence of ancient tradition, and the isolated position of this noble mountain.‡ If any one prove to me, from Mark viii. 27, in connexion with chapter ix. 2, 30, 33, that our Saviour was not glorified on Tabor, but on a hill near Cæsarea Philippi, as is affirmed by some, I am ready to surrender my opinion. The fortress which was on the top of Tabor in the days of our Lord has been brought forward as an objection to the identity. But I cannot see that much weight can be attached to this objection; for as the fortress is on the east side of the top, the heavenly scene may have been witnessed on the west, or on one of the terraces near the top. Besides, what was seen by the three apostles may have been hidden from the sight of other men who may have chanced to be near the spot, a supposition authorised by the case of Elisha and his servant on the hill of Dothan, of Saul and his companions on their way to Damascus, &c.

It was three P.M. when I commenced the descent of Tabor with my guide, and as we were at a distance of five hours from Tiberias, all possible haste was neces-

* 2 Peter i. 18. † Matt. xvii. 1–8; Mark ix. 2–8; Luke ix. 28–36.
‡ Jeremiah xlvi. 18.

sary. According to the barometric measurements of travellers, Mount Tabor is 1905 feet in height. On the north side, however, the plain at its foot is of such elevation, that the height of the hill on that side cannot be more than 600 feet. Following the well-known road from the wooded foot of Tabor by the ruins of et-Tûjar, a castle of the time of the Crusades, now a place where, in former days, the large caravans from Damascus halted and divided—one part going to Jerusalem, and another to Cairo—and where the pilgrims had to pay toll to the Arabs to the amount of a dollar, and at which now a weekly market is held; and, pursuing this road to the village of Kefr-Sabt, the sun declined, and finally disappeared behind the mountains to our left. We had lost sight of the Galilean lake since leaving Tabor. Our path led us over a slowly-rising plain, which seemed to be interminable; sometimes I thought, now I see the end of it; but no sooner had we advanced a few paces, than I saw it stretching again into the distance. It was now growing dark, and yet the lake was not in sight. But, on coming suddenly to the edge of the table-land, it burst upon my view, lying about 1000 feet below me, with Tiberias on its shore. The sight was unexpected and splendid; but the recollection that on this shore Jesus dwelt, that there he walked, taught, and performed many miracles, went to my heart. The prospect was at this hour obscured under the veil of night.

Now followed a steep and difficult descent for an hour over rough loose stones. We arrived at last at Tiberias; but, where stood our tent? I spent nearly an hour searching outside the town, and inside

in the labyrinth of ruins, before I found it. It was a Bedouïn who put me on the right scent, and I found it pitched on the south side of the town, close to the water's edge. This was another day of great exertion. I had no less than fourteen hours of travelling over broken mountain-ground, and you can imagine my exhaustion, as I threw myself on my carpet at the conclusion of that day's journey.

But, as the sun has never more quickening power than when it bursts through clouds that have long concealed it; as rest is never so sweet as after long and painful fatigue; so to the traveller in Palestine, wearied with his journeys over rocks and mountains, and his encounters with the heathen who tread down the land, does the shore of the Galilean sea possess peculiar power to revive and refresh him. A calm morning on the water's brink, when the surface is smooth as a mirror, when the barren mountains around the lake yet conceal their desolation under the soft purple haze of early dawn; when no noise from the city breaks the silence around us,—would not this yield delightful refreshing to the weary traveller, who is anxious for rest? Is there physical exhaustion? Here is water clear and cool; a bath before the sun has risen over yonder mountains in the land of the Gadarenes, will impart new life and vigour to the frame. Perhaps the mind is weary? Here everything invites to repose. What can act more beneficially on a wearied mind than being surrounded by nature's calm? Where, in Palestine, can a spot be found so peaceful as the shore of the Sea of Galilee? Where is an atmosphere so mild as that of the early morning on this strand? Where

is a sheet of water so smooth and quiet as this lake? Where are tints, blue and rose-coloured, pearl-gray and purple blended together, with shades so soft as those now spread upon these mountains, which are doubling their beauty by their reflection in the glassy sea? But perhaps the soul is anxious and uneasy from the many foes it has daily to wrestle with—foes without and within. Well, turn your eye where you will, everywhere does the voice of Jesus sound, offering rest and peace. Is there guilt, an oppressive load of guilt, on the soul? See Jesus walking by the sea-side, from that beach calling Peter and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee to the apostleship. Here He dwelt; here He wrought deliverance for soul and body. Surely this beach may fill our minds with thoughts of Jesus, and of all recorded concerning Him in the Gospels. Let us remember the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue of Capernaum;* "Hold thy peace," saith Jesus, "and come out of him;" and the unclean spirit "came out of him, and hurt him not." Or, let us think of the man sick of the palsy,† who was let down through the uncovered roof before the feet of Jesus; "and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." And afterwards, addressing those who called in question His power, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house," the multitude marvelling, and

* Mark i. 23–26; Luke iv. 33–35.

† Matt. ix. 1–7; Mark ii. 3–12; Luke v. 18–26.

glorifying God. Yet it may be that the soul is in darkness and difficulty, confounded and perplexed by many things; then look at those heights on your left, which once re-echoed the blessed words that fell from the Redeemer's lips.* These are the words which will enlighten our path, and make us go on our way rejoicing; yea, we shall be refreshed by them as by a rich dew, and bear more abundant fruit, thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold. But it is possible that, having met with so many trials and annoyances by the way, we have become more intimately acquainted with ourselves; and we may be groaning over the depth of corruption thus discovered to our view. Oh! let us not fear, for on yonder strand there stood of old a custom-house, where Jesus was once a guest; there He sat surrounded by a multitude of publicans and sinners, so that the Pharisees asked why it was that He ate with publicans and sinners. "But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" † as on another occasion, when speaking of the lost sheep, He assured them that the Son of man was come to save that which was lost. ‡ Think of the woman who had suffered from an issue of blood for twelve years; § of the blind, the lepers, and those possessed of devils, especially of the poor demoniac on the opposite coast, in the land of the Gadarenes. ‖ Do not all these ad-

* Matt. v., vi., vii.; Luke vi. 20-49.
† Matt. ix. 10-13; Mark ii. 15-17. ‡ Matt. xviii. 11.
§ Matt. ix. 20-22; Mark v. 25-34; Luke viii. 43-48.
‖ Matt. viii. 28-34; Mark v. 1-20; Luke viii. 26-39.

dress us thus: "O thou, whosoever thou art, look on our diseases. Were there ever any so desperate as these? Yet Jesus saved us from them. It was by this very lake that Jesus said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Is not His pardoning love infinitely great? When the servant owed ten thousand talents, 'the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.' Therefore be of good cheer, only believe; all things are possible to him that believeth." But still it may be that the soul remains depressed. Like the flower lying on the ground prostrated by the wind and rain, so may the soul be giving way to the storms that rage within and around her, and be ready to perish. If so, let the eye behold the Galilean lake. It is not always that its waters are so smooth and calm. Sometimes sudden gusts sweep over its surface with all the fury of the hurricane. Who can tell how many poor fishermen have found their graves in these waters? Of such storms we have more than one account in the sacred narrative.* Once the little ship, with the Lord and His disciples on board, was in danger of being overwhelmed by the waves. And what was the Lord doing in these circumstances? He was asleep in the hinder part of the ship. And is it thus that He allows his friends to perish? "Master," cried the alarmed disciples, "carest thou not that we perish?" But "he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great

* Matt. viii. 23–27; Mark iv. 35–39; Luke viii. 22–25; Matt. xiv. 24, 30; Mark vi. 48–51; John vi. 18–21.

calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" Will not a look on this calm lake cause the storm within to become a calm, if the eye of faith be, at the same time, directed to the great Master? The echoes still sound upon the waters: "Peace, be still. Where is thy faith? Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid. O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" The soul may answer, I will believe; but, alas! my wants are so many and so great; whence will there be sufficient to satisfy these? These now desolate, rocky hills on the north-east side of the lake, give you an answer, as they repeat the words of the Saviour: "Why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?"* Strange it is, but true, that with all this, the doubts and fears of the soul may not be dispelled. Once in close and intimate communion with her Lord, she may have backslidden, and denied Him from whom she has received so many benefits. No wonder that she goes on her way mourning, and grieving over such unfaithfulness and sin. Nevertheless, O soul! consider the greatness of Jesus' love—a love unto death, yea, even beyond death. Cast once more thine eye to the western shore of this lake, to yonder steep promontory between Tiberias and Medjdel. St John tells us, in the close of his Gospel, how the risen Jesus revealed him-

* Matt. xvi. 8–10; Mark viii. 17–21; Matt. xiv. 17–21; xv. 34–38; Mark vi. 38–44; viii. 1–9; Luke ix. 13–17; John vi. 5–13.

self to his disciples in that locality, as they were occupied in fishing. Remember His thrice-repeated question, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? and His gracious command, Follow thou me.* Remember, also, the words of St Paul: "Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." And again, "Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." †

Yes, thou lovely lake of Galilee, though thy mountains are now barren, thy cities and villages in ruins, and thy fields and gardens desolate; though the fishermen have disappeared from thy waters, and the inhabitants fled from thy shores; yet these naked and scorched mountains, these solitary ruins, these waste fields, and that deserted sheet of water—all speak of peace to the wearied traveller. Whatever changes time has here produced, Jesus is ever the same, and we may be filled with joy and peace in believing when every object on which the eye can rest brings to our remembrance the love and compassion of Jesus. "Peace be unto thee,"—"Depart in peace," are the sounds borne upon the breeze around the Sea of Galilee. "Yes," responds the soul, "for He is my peace." ‡

* John xxi. 1-22. † Hebrews xii. 12, 13, 28. ‡ Ephesians ii. 14.

NAZARETH, *23d May.*

When I was on the shores of the Lake of Tiberias, I could not rest satisfied with a mere visit to the town, but wished to make a circuit of the lake. This I have been unable to accomplish, but have ridden along the western shore without difficulty, there being no danger on this side. I went to the Metzellim of Tiberias, a certain Mohammed Effendi, concerning whom I hear many complaints, to ask him for an escort to the opposite side of the lake; he refused to grant it, saying, that the Bedouïns in that district were more than ever in revolt against Government, because of the recently enforced conscription, and that it was not only unsafe for me to go there, but that he himself was insecure in Tiberias (or Tabariëh, as the Arabs call it), being left without any military force to protect him against a sudden attack of the Bedouïns. I felt much disappointed, and the more so because I was under the impression that he raised these difficulties in order to excuse his disobedience to the orders contained in my firman, which, but for such circumstances, would have obliged him to afford me as much protection as was requisite for my safety. His objections had an appearance of truth, but I saw from the air of indifference with which he regarded the firman, that he cared as little for the command of his lord and master as for my very distinct assurance that I would lodge a complaint against him with the competent authorities. Mohammed Effendi, the Metzellim of Tiberias, is the only person of authority in the land

who has refused to promote my surveying. After what I have heard of him from others, and seen of him myself, I cannot say that I feel surprised at it.

So I only travelled along the west shore with my guide from Nazareth as far as the ruins of Tell-Hum, returning by the same road to Tiberias. I need not detain you with a description of this tract of country, with its ruins and fountains, the village of Medjdel, and the plain of Gennesaret to the north of it, as this has been done very minutely by other travellers. There are only one or two facts which I shall give you as results of investigation, reserving the statements of the grounds on which they are based for another opportunity. These facts relate to the position of Magdala, Bethsaida, Chorazin, Capernaum, and Tiberias.

Magdala has been supposed to be the same as Medjdel, a village distant an hour and a quarter to the north of Tiberias. The name of the Arab village has certainly much in common with the name of the Jewish town. Eusebius and Jerome, however, assert that the latter, which, according to them, is properly Mageda or Magedan, not Magdala, lay on the east side of the lake. We have great respect for these fathers, but the narrative of Matt. xv. 39, and Mark viii. 10, seems, according to our interpretation, clearly to place the coasts of Magdala (in Mark, Dalmanutha) upon the west side. We, therefore, take Medjdel to be identical with Magdala. Whether this was the city of Mary Magdalene, to whom our Lord first appeared after His resurrection, I dare not decide. One tradition affirms that it is, while another places the Magdala of Mary in Judea. With

Migdal-el of Joshua xix. 38, Medjdel cannot correspond, as the former belonged to Naphtali, while the latter is within the boundaries of Zebulon.

Bethsaida, or rather the two Bethsaidas, have given rise to much dispute among the learned, some refusing to admit that there have been two places on these shores both called "the dwelling of fishermen." The Gospels, however, are most explicit upon the point. In Mark viii. 22, and Luke ix. 10, Bethsaida Gaulonites is evidently spoken of, the ruins of which have been recognised by Dr Eli Smith and other travellers on a hill called et-Tell, on the east bank of the Jordan, close to the northern shores of the lake. Josephus calls this Bethsaida-Julias, and informs us that Philip the Tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonites gave it this epithet in honour of Julius Cæsar, having enlarged the town, and adorned it with public buildings.* The other Bethsaida, of which the Gospels speak, was in Galilee, and accordingly on the west side of the lake.† I do not hesitate to identify the ruins of Khan-Meniyeh with the Bethsaida in Galilee.

Capernaum, the toll-city on "the way of the sea" (the "via maris" of old), the way leading from Galilee along the north shore of the Sea of Galilee to the country beyond Jordan,—Capernaum, the frontier town between Zebulon and Naphtali, we can only expect to find on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, and, without doubt, we do find it in the ruins of Tell-Hum, an Arabic name, closely allied to the Roman Kafer or

* Josephus, *Jew. Antiq.* xviii. 3.

† Matt. xi. 21–24; Luke x. 13–15; John i. 44; xii. 21. See also Von Raumer's *Palestina*, Art. Bethsaida.

Caphar-Nahum. Three hundred years ago, Tell-Hum was universally received by the pilgrims as Capernaum; it is only in our days that objections have been taken to the identity.

There seems to me to be more difficulty regarding Chorazin. From the passages in Matt. xi. 21, and Luke x. 13, it has been supposed that the miracle of the five loaves was performed at or near this town. Is this supposition correct? If so, Chorazin must be sought for on the east side of the lake, not far from Bethsaida-Julias. This accords with the opinion of the pilgrims, and of the learned in olden times, and is not at variance with any known fact regarding the place. Richardson, however, informs us that when on his way from Tell-Hum to Safed, a ruin was mentioned to him of the name of Kerâjeh, lying in a valley to the north-west of Tell-Hum. This account is confirmed by Dr Keith. This seems to point very distinctly to Chorazin. I do not, however, find sufficient ground to warrant the assertion of a decisive opinion.

Tiberias, the same fathers (Eusebius and Jerome) have endeavoured to identify with the Old Testament Cinnereth, Chinereth, or Chineroth, the New Testament Gennesareth.* They rest their opinion, however, merely upon report, a fact which later Biblical geographers have overlooked. The Dutch authors, Reland, Halma, and Bachiene, have directed the attention of their readers to this circumstance, stating at the same time that Tiberias was built by Herod Antipas upon a spot on which no town previously existed,

* Numbers xxxiv. 11; Deut. iii. 17; Josh. xii. 3; xix. 35; 1 Kings xv. 20; Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 53; Luke v. 1, &c.

and was called after the reigning emperor. Tiberias is only mentioned once in Scripture, and this in the Gospel of John, in which Gospel also the Sea of Galilee is called the Sea of Tiberias.* The history of Tiberias from the days of Josephus till our own has been frequently sketched. I therefore suppose that you are aware of its importance during the middle ages as the seat of Jewish learning. From that time its schools and synagogues have been gradually decaying, till now there remains but a small and insignificant remnant. Notwithstanding, as one of the four holy cities of Palestine, Tiberias is still in great esteem. The *Narrative* of the Scottish missionaries, and Wilson's *Lands of the Bible*, give us some particulars regarding the Jews of Tiberias, which are worthy of earnest consideration. The state of the city itself, which has suffered very severely from wars and earthquakes, gives too faithful a picture of the present condition of the Jewish population. Tiberias is said to contain about a thousand Jews and an equal number of Moslems; of Christians there are but few.

On my ride by the side of the lake, I was struck by the shore being covered with stones, chiefly of lava, which had been rounded by the continual action of the water. Walking on such stones is exceedingly troublesome, and it could not be here, I thought, that Jesus walked by the sea-side, when He called Peter and Andrew, and the sons of Zebedee, to the apostleship. On comparing the evangelists we find that the place where our Lord walked on that occasion must have been near Bethsaida, probably to the north of it, as he

* John vi. 1, 23; xxi. 1.

was going to Capernaum; for we are told in John i. 44, that Bethsaida was the city of Andrew and Peter, and in Mark i. 19-21, that when He had gone a little farther He saw James and John mending their nets, that He called them, and that "they went into Capernaum." Now, it is between Medjdel and Khan-Meniyeh (Magdala and Bethsaida) that the only spot is found where there is a beach, and which is not only suitable but most inviting for a walk by the side of the still and quiet waters. I believe that I do not venture too much in affirming it was here that our blessed Lord walked, and here also that He shewed himself to His disciples after His resurrection (John xxi.), as it appears in the latter instance that it must have been near the residence of Peter, which we know to have been in Bethsaida.

But what wanderer, whose feet tread these shores, can represent to himself the Master and His disciples? Perhaps it is well that our imagination refuses us its aid; we might else be so enraptured with the idea as to fall down and kiss the sand, the very beach on which the Lord once trod. How needful that we should be continually reminded that "now, henceforth, know we Christ no more after the flesh!"*

On returning to my tent after the excursion to Tell-Hum, I found myself quite exhausted, and unfit for any work that night. The heat in the neighbourhood of the Sea of Tiberias is very great, which cannot surprise us when we consider that it lies 329 feet below the level of the Mediterranean,† and when we look

* 2 Cor. v. 16.

† According to the measurements of Lieutenant Symonds.

at the barrenness of the surrounding hills. In former times, when foliage was more abundant and the ground more cultivated, this, as well as other regions similarly situated, must have enjoyed a much more temperate climate. I would fain have made use of the little boat, the only one now on the lake; but I was too fatigued, and, besides, had the prospect of fresh toil on the coming day.

And no sooner had that day appeared, than I was again on my way. I first paid a visit to the hot baths of Emmaus, which are on the shore, at the distance of half an hour's walk to the south of Tiberias. Ibrahim Pasha had a new bath-house built here in 1840, but it is already falling into decay. I had an idea of indulging in the luxury of a bath; but when I saw seven or eight natives disporting themselves in the large octagonal tank under the cupola of the building, I thought no more of it, but hasted from the hot vapoury atmosphere of the place. There are, indeed, some private bath-rooms, but in such a state of disrepair as to be unavailable to Europeans. The bath is highly valued by the natives. Just as I arrived, two Turkish officers rode off on their return to the camp on the opposite side of the lake. This ride of about nine miles they had taken that they might enjoy the refreshment.

I returned to Nazareth by the ordinary way of Lûbieh and Kefr-Kenna. The latter is a large and also a fine village with rich gardens, and contains some ruins dating from the time of the Crusades. It has been taken by some for the Cana of John ii., but

erroneously, as is shewn by Robinson in his often-mentioned *Biblical Researches.*

How did I rejoice when, on returning to the house of kind Mr Klein, I found your letter of——. Signor Finzi, to whom it had been forwarded by Mr Black of Beirût, had sent it on to Nazareth. I return you my answer by the same way. The Lord willing, I intend to leave this land by the steamer of the 22d June. If you can at all represent to yourself the long and arduous journeys which I have prosecuted day after day, you will not be surprised to hear that I must soon bring my travels to a close. Moreover, the heat is daily increasing, which to the traveller is no small impediment. That I have been enabled for several months to lead a life of almost uninterrupted movement over mountains and valleys, through all kinds of privation and danger, is a mercy that calls for deep gratitude. But I begin to feel that everything has its limits. I dare not continue my travels beyond the middle of next month, however interesting, and in many respects pleasant, they are. I have yet much land to explore, but as my time is limited, I shall have to pass over it with hurried steps. I regret this the less, as there do not remain many places to which scriptural association gives an interest.—With best wishes, believe me.

P.S.—I forgot to speak of the missionary labours in this place. What shall I say, my friend? It is only a beginning as yet, and you know that all beginnings are difficult. To-day fourteen men came to hear Mr Klein preach the Gospel. Everything seems as yet to be

dead; if now and then a blade of the spiritual wheat begins to shew itself, the unfriendly hand of the Latins is ready to tear it up. But the Lord reigns, and will not forsake the work of His own hands.*

* See vol. i. pp. 270, 271, 277, 278. The information which we have since received about Nazareth, is full of encouragement. There seems to be no place in Palestine where the preaching of the gospel has been attended with so much blessing. From a letter of Bishop Gobat's (see *Record*, January 5th, 1854), we learn that the Protestant community at Nazareth already numbers 200 members. The persecutions of the Latin Church have made these declare themselves the sooner as Protestants to the Turkish authorities.

FROM NAZARETH TO BANIAS AND DAMASCUS—TRAVELS IN LEBANON—RETURN TO BEIRÛT.

SAFED, *25th May.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—As usual, I take advantage of the first leisure hour to tell you all that I have seen, and all that has occurred to me. Last night I was too tired to take up my pen. I had made a tour of twelve hours, besides being oppressed by a heavy sirocco. I feel more and more, daily, that I am much less able to endure the fatigues of the journey than I was at the beginning. No wonder, indeed, having had no time of rest to recruit myself, and prepare for what is yet before me.

This morning there was a change for the better in the weather. The sirocco had ceased; heavy clouds had gathered from the direction of the sea, and had cooled the atmosphere by discharging themselves in a smart shower with thunder and lightning. It was something quite unusual for this season of the year, but it has had the effect of reviving and refreshing nature. Safed, which has itself a cool and lofty situation, has, since the shower, become a place where new life may be inhaled. You perceive by the date of this, that I have allowed myself a day and a half here; I have been making arrangements for my further travels, and also filling up my survey which in January last I

was able to bring only as far south as Kefr-Burreim. (See vol. i. pp. 176, 177.) I rejoice to be able to inform you now, that I have to-day had it in my power to complete the triangles of my surveys by an excursion to Sasa. When I add my previous tours, and the route I followed yesterday, to what has been made known to us of Galilee by the late consul Schultz and other travellers, then will at least the principal localities of this part of the land come to light, and I hope I shall succeed in drawing up a pretty accurate map. The least known part of Galilee was the hill-country, to the north and north-east of Kana-el-Jelil, the site of the Cana of John ii. Dr Schultz, of all travellers during these late years, has been the one that has communicated most on this tract of country, It is in this region that he found the ruins of Jotapata — the fortress which Josephus describes in such lively colours as impregnable, but which was nevertheless taken by the Romans, on which occasion Josephus himself fell into their hands. The villages 'Arrabeh, Sachnîn, Sellameh, Kefr-'Anan, Rameh, Ferathi, and others, were also recognised by Dr Schultz, as some of the most important cities of Galilee named by the Jewish historian. Dr Robinson, and Dr Smith, too, as they told me, in their last journey from Beirût to Jerusalem, passed through that district, and verified some of Schultz's discoveries. Yesterday it was my turn to traverse it, in quite a different direction, however, from that followed by the American travellers. I had left Nazareth early in the morning. The kind-hearted missionary Klein accompanied me as far as Sephouris, the ancient Dio Cesarea of the Romans, and in their

days one of the largest towns in Galilee. We stood for a while admiring the remains of the church of the Holy Virgin, which according to tradition was dedicated to her because here had been the residence of her ancestors. We then bid each other farewell. He would soon again reach his home at Nazareth, from which Sephouris, or Sefouriëh as it is now called, is distant only one hour's ride; my home, that is to say, my tent, although following my very steps, was still to be for a long while beyond my reach. From this point I directed my course towards the north-east, first through the beautiful olive-grounds below Sefouriëh, and then over the plain of Zebulon, or, as Josephus calls it, the Great Plain, which with considerable breadth stretches in its greater length from the south-west to the north-east.

In the midst of this plain, to the west of the village Rûmaneh, I lighted unexpectedly on an ancient and ruined tank, and, five minutes further, upon a hill covered with the remains of walls of high antiquity. The people of the country whom I met here, called these ruins Haromeh. When riding up from this to the ruins of Cana, I was struck with a singular occurrence, namely, the gathering in of hay. Often had I thought how much it was to be regretted that the splendid grass of this country was left to perish on the field without being turned to account by any one, while the cattle are almost starved to death during winter, when they can hardly scent out a single green blade among the dry prickly shrubs on the slopes of the hills, their careless masters never making any provision of food for them. I was, therefore, glad to see the hay gathered

here, and brought into the village. And how? you ask,—perhaps, in hay-carts or wains? No, no, my friend, people have not got so far as that in Palestine; all here proceeds according to the modes of the country; the hay is piled up on the back of a camel, which, with his huge bundle thus towering above him, when seen from afar, really does look very like a hay-laden cart.

Cana lies on the north side of the plain at the base of a range of hills which bounds it on this side, under the name of Jebel-Kaukab, or Jebel-Djefat. It is distant from Nazareth two hours and a quarter, when following the nearest road, and presents nothing at present but a heap of forsaken houses, already half in ruins. Relics of the days of Nathanael,* who was born here, and of the days when the Lord Jesus sat at the nuptial table, where the wine ran short, but was provided by His almighty power,†—such relics, in the form of ancient building stones, lie spread around. The nearest water I found is a well a quarter of an hour to the east of the ruins.

The marriage feast, with the happy guests, and the Son of God, even that Jesus who came to seek and to save sinners, in the midst of them; and the heap of ruined houses now abandoned by every human soul, —what a contrast, what a change!

Three quarters of an hour past Cana to the east, a narrow ascending pass in the hills shewed us the way to the north. Had we, after ascending the winding path half-way among the thick brushwood, struck off to the left, we should soon have found ourselves upon the rock of Jotapata. The shortness of the time and

* John xxi. 2. † John ii. 7–11; John iv. 46.

the length of the journey that still lay before me, did not, however, permit me to make this deviation. Our course accordingly continued northerly, and led down into a basin among the hills, where the eye could hardly desire anything more lovely or picturesque. Here lie 'Arrabeh and Sachnîn with their ancient remains, in the midst of corn-fields, olive-gardens, orchards of pomegranates, apricots, and other fruits, and surrounded by dark-leaved oak woods, amid which here and there the thick tufted branches of the garûb might be seen rising aloft. My predecessors have already declared these villages to be the Araba and Sogane of Josephus.*

A short way past 'Arrabeh, that most picturesque valley which I had admired before from the heights near Ba'neh (vol. i. p. 285), opens out. I had now to traverse its north-eastern half, close by the ruins of a castle dating from the wars between the European Christians and the Saracens for the possession of this land. It is now called Deir-Hana (the convent of John). We here came on and followed for some time the highway from 'Akka to Damascus, right across the plain. Had not the day been so uncommonly oppressive, this would have been one of my pleasantest excursions. Just imagine, the plain is covered with oaks and other trees as far as the eye can reach. Truly not the half is known in Europe of the picturesque and lovely spots to be found in Palestine. How should I, who have been allowed to see them, urge upon all who take an interest in Israel's land, and the land of Israel's Redeemer, to come and see!

* Schultz held 'Arrabeh to be Gabara. This is a mistake. See Ritter, *Erdkunde*, 16te Th., on the above-named place.

Through the beautiful Wadi-Sellameh, with its fountain and brook, which flows past the ruin Sellameh, the ancient Selame of Josephus, our path ascended to a more elevated plain on the south-eastern base of the richly wooded Jebel Jermak. Here are the villages of Kefr-'Anân and Ferathi. As soon as the latter of these is passed, the winding mountain-path takes a steep turn upwards. The whole of southern Galilee now begins to display itself, with all its plains and mountains, its woods and villages, its Tabor, and the close adjacent Sea of Tiberias. In passing over this hill in the afternoon, when the lowering sun begins to throw his long horizontal shadows, the beauty of the landscape is, of course, still increased; and really I think no traveller could follow a route more rich in noble, and at the same time ever-varying, prospects than this from Nazareth to Safed. The ride over these hills, especially, seems to take you through a garden that has no end. The bushes and trees are infinite in number and sorts, while the whole air is embalmed with the odours of flowers and plants.

Had my mule-driver been a little more on the alert, we would have reached Safed about five o'clock P.M. Already I saw the town lying before me, scattered as its houses are, over the high mountain top. I thought one more half hour and we shall have gained our point; but unfortunately a wrong path took us first a good way off the Safed road; our mukhari then led us through the open ground, where we soon were brought to a stand among the corn fields. Some people passing put us right, but it was too late. In order to reach Safed we had to go down into a glen, so narrow and so deep,

that it would have made my hair stand on end had it been the first time I had to descend into such a gorge. How we ever contrived to reach the bed of the stream below I know not, and as little do I know how we contrived to climb the almost perpendicular ascent on the other side, but the feat was accomplished at last, and that was enough. Think, however, what this missing the high road cost us. It was half-past seven before we pitched the tent under a hawthorn tree at Safed. Nevertheless, to that mistake I owe my making acquaintance with one of the boldest glens of all Galilee. Had I not seen it with my own eyes, I never could have had an idea of so rich a vegetation, or of such splendid scenery, as that of the deep mountain ravine through which we had to find our way.

In Safed, my friend, you are no longer a stranger. Travellers and compilers have already described it to you copiously and repeatedly in their books. Recollect, then, the mountain, nearly 3000 feet high,* with its different groups of houses that lie spread over the slopes like so many quarters or wards, and which, owing to the white colour of the soft limestone of which they are built, stand out conspicuously amid the dark green of the olive, fig, and pomegranate trees in which they are embosomed. Remember, too, the castle ruin on the top of the mountain, from which one enjoys that noble panorama of southern Galilee and the Sea of Gennesareth—a view of which I yesterday morning drew a sketch at the time the sun was rising above the Hhauran mountains. Should you

* According to Russegger.

ever come to Safed, neglect not, above all things, to climb to the castle; the indescribably magnificent views from that point will amply repay you for your trouble. Acquainted, then, as you are with the descriptions of Safed, you will remember also the frightful earthquake of 1st January 1837, of which so striking and affecting an account has been given us by the pen of the missionary Thomson.* So many thousands in an instant of time buried under heaps of rubbish! "Among the survivors," so ends Mr Thomson's touching narrative, "is a worthy man, who has long wished to be connected with us, and in whom we have felt much interest. He applied about a year ago to have his son admitted to our high school; but he was then too young. When I left Beirût it was my intention to bring this lad with me on my return, should he be alive; but, alas! the afflicted father has to mourn not only his death, but that of his mother, and of all his beloved family but one."

Fully fifteen years have elapsed since that fatal day. The heaps of rubbish have been removed from the streets. The houses that were thrown down have been rebuilt. The gardens and fields where the birds of prey and the wolves disputed with each other the possession of the bloody remains of the mangled victims again produced fruit and wheat as in former times. The families that perished have had their places taken by fresh emigrants—Jews transplanted from Russia, Poland, Germany, and elsewhere — and Safed, which, as Thomson has so expressively re-

* See the *Missionary Herald*, Boston, Nov. 1837, vol. xxxiii. No. 11; or Robinson's *Bib. Res.* vol. iii. p. 321, &c. 471, &c.

marked, *was and was no more*—Safed *again is;* Safed is once more one of the principal towns of Galilee, as it was in the days of the Crusaders and the Saracens. The disaster that befell Safed is forgotten!

Forgotten? . . . . Forgotten? No, not forgotten, far from forgotten. In "God's book" all stands recorded with the judgment past on each according to the state in which death had found him on that dreadful day. But here below, too, Safed's calamity has not been forgotten. Hardly had I finished breakfast this morning when an old man visited me in my tent, and addressed me, with friendly manners, in the English tongue. I saw at once that he must have been in connexion with missionaries that had taught him this language. His son, a youngster of about seventeen years, was at his side; he, too, stammered out some words of broken English—enough, however, to make himself understood. My pocket Bible lay open beside me, and soon became the subject of our conversation. The old Danûs Kiriam (so was his name) spoke to me like one who had been led by God through deep waters, and brought to the knowledge of his lost condition, and to the believing acceptance of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as his all-sufficient salvation and righteousness. He had heard the message of mercy from various missionaries in earlier days at Jerusalem. Yet the plough had to go deep into his heart, in order to take away its stony places. He settled himself at Safed. Joyous and cheering the sun rose each morning over his head; his wife and children were the delight of his life; his house seemed established for ever. Accustomed to go at the break of day to his

fields, on the 1st of January 1837, too, he had gone forth with a heart full of life and happiness, and the sun greeted his coming, as it had done yesterday and the day before, with its friendly light. All at once the earth shakes with a tremendous shock! The ground heaves and quakes to and fro. The rocks are rent asunder. The abyss creaks and thunders with a low but portentous rumbling noise. The earth opens in rents and fissures, rises and falls, moves to the right and left, and makes the very blood curdle in one's veins with terror. The hill of Safed shakes off its houses as a fig-tree in autumn throws off its leaves. Whoever is on foot hastens down the hill, and seeks safety in flight. But it is too late. *More than six thousand men are in a moment buried under hills of ruins!* *

And Danûs? With many tears he related to me how, trembling and almost perishing from fear, he returned to his house. But his house! it lay deep buried beneath stones and earth, and along with his house, his wife, children, and relatives. Danûs never beheld them again. He is the very man of whom Mr Thomson wrote that he had to deplore the death of his much loved son, his wife, and younger children, with the exception only of one young boy. That boy is now grown to be a youth, and sat by his side.

I was deeply affected by the account Danûs gave me of the disastrous event. "Ah, sir," he added, "I mourn, but I do not complain. God has by heavy

* The Scriptures make mention of such a tremendous earthquake as having taken place in the reign of king Uzziah. See Amos i. 1 and Zech. xiv. 5.

strokes brought me to the knowledge of myself, and has given me a Saviour, who very much compensates me for all this loss. Nevertheless, I live in a place of darkness and unrighteousness, a city of many inhabitants, yet who know not their God and Saviour, and I daily suffer much distress from witnessing their deplorable condition, and how they destroy themselves more and more. For some time we had Mr Daniels among us as an evangelist to the Jews, but their opposition was so great that he was compelled to leave Safed again. Not long ago Dr Kalley was here; but his stay was brief, as circumstances called him elsewhere. Could he have remained, I believe he might have been a great blessing to Safed; for many had begun to cherish affection and regard for him, and to listen to whatever he had to say. Thus this place is now bereft of all spiritual light, and my own soul often shares, alas! in the general darkness. Let me beseech you, then, by the love of Jesus, whom you desire to love in return, to make known our forlorn condition to your Christian friends in Europe. Speak to them of the 8000 souls living at Safed, one half Jews, the other half Moslems and Eastern Christians; explain to them how well suited Safed is for the residence of Europeans, from its high and salubrious position; direct their attention to Safed as a suitable central point for a missionary, who might besides preach the Gospel to the surrounding villages and towns, where all is at present lying bound in chains of darkness. O that my voice might be like that of the man of Macedonia in the vision of Paul, crying, 'Come over and help us!' and

that the Lord may restore you in safety to your friends, and put you in a condition to speak in behalf of Safed with blessed consequences for His kingdom!"

I know nothing better that I can do, my friend, than immediately to communicate to you what Danûs has said to me, hoping that, feeble as my attempt may be, the Lord may bring it to a good issue. I must add, moreover that Danûs, in the reports of the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, appears as agent for the Jerusalem mission to Safed. That character, assuredly, is merely nominal. I have reason to fear also, that if abandoned to himself, there is not much that is favourable to be expected from his agency. Were he, however, aroused and quickened, led again to more earnest seeking after heavenly things, and therein confirmed, I believe that he might become a useful auxiliary to any missionary that might wish to establish himself at Safed.

If nothing comes in the way, I purpose setting off again to-morrow morning for the Jordan; proceeding from it along the lake Merom to Kadesh-Naphtali and so to Banias. In order to this I have already made an agreement with a guide, a certain Abd-el-Kader, a Mohammedan who yesterday accompanied me to Sasa, which lies at three hours' distance to the north-west of Safed. He seems to be tolerably well acquainted with the villages and ruins. It is from him that I have received information respecting the Jebel-Jermak opposite to Safed, not having had time myself to visit that high and thickly-wooded mountain. Among other things he told me that the name Jermak belongs only to the north-western part of the hill, and is given

to it from an ancient hamlet lying at its foot at an hour and a half's distance to the south-west of Sasa; but that the south-eastern side is called Jebel-es-Zebûd, after a ruin of that name on that side of the hill. Another important ruin on this mountain is Marûn, plainly distinguishable from Safed. The Jews often go there on pilgrimages, to pray at the graves of some of their chief rabbis. They hold this Marûn to be the same with the Shimron-Meron, one of the royal Canaanitish cities of Joshua xii. 20.

BANIAS (CESAREA PHILIPPI), *27th May.*

It is now five o'clock, P.M. I arrived here two hours ago. "Do you see that tall oak overtopping the other trees?" said Abd-el-Kader as we approached the village. "That is the spot where you may pitch your tent. You will there enjoy the cool shade of that old gigantic tree."

And truly I may call this spot a garden, and the refreshing shade of the oak, now probably five centuries old, glorious. But what especially delights me at this moment, and at the same time makes me hasten to write down for you the brief account of my journeyings yesterday and to-day, is my meeting here with an old friend. Himself, indeed, I have not yet seen. He has gone with Dr Robinson to climb up to the castle on the high and steep hill, and is to be back by sunset. There will then be much to communicate to each other and to talk about; therefore, *profitons des instants.*

But who then is this friend? No other than my host of former days, the missionary Thomson. You

may well imagine how I stared at meeting here his tent and his servants.

Mr Thomson has been for the last few days the travelling companion of his countryman, the American professor. The latter had safely got on in his journey as far as Hâsbeiya, and Dr Smith had left him there, and returned to Beirût to resume his missionary occupations, while Mr Thomson had taken his place as Dr Robinson's assistant. The extraordinary exertions and fatigues of the journey were not, however, without injurious consequences. Dr R. when at Hâsbeiya was seized with an attack of fever, and has not even yet altogether recovered. How happy, therefore, should I deem myself, for having been enabled, under all the exertions of my tours, to continue every day my labours! Of my friend Mr Thomson, and of all the members of his family, I heard nothing but favourable tidings. You will now understand why I feel rejoiced, and why, to-day, my pen glides so swiftly along. Meanwhile you are no loser by it, for, however interesting my journey was during these two last days, with regard to the geographical and topographical knowledge of the land, yet I suppose you would rather like to see its results from my map than my letter; therefore I will only notice that I left Safed early in the morning, took my way through the deep chasm to the north of Safed, then descended in an east-south-east direction, through the steep Wadi-Feraïm, where a rivulet trickles down, and serves for the irrigation of some gardens at a lower entrance of the wadi. After that, I crossed the undulating and well-cultivated plain to the west of the Jordan, a plain

which is entirely composed of lava; here noted down several villages and ruins, situated either in a plain, or upon the slopes of the hills; and, about nine o'clock, reached Jisr-Benat-Yakûb (the bridge of Jacob's daughters), where it was fearfully hot, and where I found, at the side of an old ruined tower, just sufficient shade to sit down and take my breakfast. From the name of this bridge, you perceive that tradition makes Jacob cross the Jordan at this place. I shall not now touch upon this point, but I must remind you that caravans from Damascus to 'Akka in Jerusalem, go all by the way of the Jisr-Benat-Yakûb.

The Jordan flows here through a channel which, by its black and barren lava sides, forms the least attractive part of the whole river. A little higher up, this channel decreases in depth, and, at a southern extremity of the lake Hûleh, the Jordan flows through a perfectly level plain, covered with high reeds. It is in this vicinity that a wide space of ground expands between the Jordan and the mountains of Naphtali, and upon this plain, to the south-west of the lake, I suppose the great battle took place between Joshua and the five united kings;* for the plain to the north of the lake is nothing better than a series of pools and marshes, which it is perfectly impossible to penetrate, much less to be used as a battle-field. The Mohammedans have no knowledge of the Bible narrative of this battle; Joshua, however, is not only familiar to them, but they have even erected a weli to his honour, at the upper end of a narrow pass, by which one ascends to the north-west of the lake to Kedesh. This weli is called

* Joshua xi. 1–11.

Nabi-Yûsha. We rested for a short while under the shadow of an old terebinth, the clusters of which, for many centuries, may have covered the monument. The shade, indeed, was welcome, after having been exposed the whole day to the scorching rays of the sun, as we rode through the plain and along the borders of the lake. Four tells on the south and south-west side of this lake drew my attention; but their names have not led me to the discovery of any ancient places. I hope, at an early period, to communicate to you some old geographical details on the Hûleh-valley, with its lake, its morass, its Bedouïn inhabitants, its antiquities, its surrounding mountains, and the waters which flow through its basin, especially the Jordan and the Melaha.

Kedesh, or Kades, I reached when the sun was nearly setting, weary and anxious for rest, just as I fancy in days of old many a persecuted debtor must have arrived here, when Kedesh was a city of refuge of Naphtali.* What an excellent central position, exactly what was wanted for a city of refuge for the northern part of the land! At present Kades is only a miserable hamlet. It lies upon a tell at the south-west extremity of a well-cultivated mountain plain, and displays still a good many remains of the days of old, such as hewn stones, pieces of columns, sarcophagi, and, amongst others, also two ruins, of which one seems to me to have been a mausoleum, and the other a temple; but I am not archæologist enough to venture to say more about it. At the foot of the tell is a splendid fountain. When we passed it on our way up to the village, it was surrounded by a group of women who had

* Joshua xix. 37; xx. 7; xxi. 32.

come hither to fetch water. The prospect from Kedesh is on all sides wide and extensive, except towards the west, where the mountains rise several feet higher than the terrace of Kedesh itself. The Hûleh-lake is not visible, it being situated too much immediately under the steep mountain slope; but the swampy plain to the north of the lake is open to full view.

I fancy, as I am speaking of Kedesh, Barak, and Jaël the wife of Heber the Kenite, who had "pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh," present themselves to your mind. With regard to Zaanaim, I have fruitlessly sought for that name.

Our morning ride was delicious, and at the same time refreshing. The mountain air was cool, and the landscape offered a variety of the most splendid scenes. But there was something else which increased my enjoyment, namely, again seeing Lebanon and Hermon, mountains with which I became so familiar when a few months ago I wandered about at their feet. Hermon's broad summit was yet adorned with its crown of snow; the far distant summits of Mount Senîn, too, presented themselves as if ploughed in bright, white furrows; the lower parts of Hermon and Lebanon, however, were covered with all the magnificence of fresh greening wood. What a difference these present to the naked and scorching mountains of Judea and Ephraim!

Through a natural park of oaks and terebinths our path gradually brought us down to the hot and marshy plain of the Hûleh. We now found ourselves at the north-west extremity of this plain, where the ground is considerably elevated above the level of the lake. But notwithstanding this elevation it is abundantly

intersected with large and small rivulets, so that, with all the local knowledge of Abd-el-Kader, we had to make many a winding before we had cleared the marshy tract. A large ruin called Zuweiah, we passed at the western base of a hill which projected towards the south, and which is called Tell Haye, *i. e.*, Hill of the Serpents. A little farther on we had to cross a pretty large brook, called Chalsa; in another half hour the brook Dufneh. After that we came upon more firm ground, a tract gradually rising towards the north, and covered with large and small loose lava boulders. The Hûleh-plain, properly speaking, ends here. Josephus mentions the city of Dafné as situated at the extremity of the morass, and he is quite right, though some travellers have thought him to be mistaken. Dafné's site had for many centuries been lost, and I discovered it in this tell, covered with ruins, at the side of the Jordan, still called Tell-Dufneh. The brook Dufneh is called after this town.

At half an hour's journey to the north of Tell-Dufneh we reached Jisr-el-Ghujar, a composition of Roman and Eastern architecture, as its great round central arch, and its small pointed side arches indicate. The Jordan was now reduced to a large brook, flowing on under the middle arch. The bed was dry under the two other arches. Under one of these we sat down to enjoy an hour's rest, and, indeed, a more delightful halting-place I could not desire. The arches of the bridge offered me a shade, the river afforded me cool and clear water, and the magnificent jessamine shrubs along the banks, intermingled with the splendid red flowers of the oleander bushes, cheered me by their

odours and fragrance, whilst numberless little singers among the branches of willows and sycamores seemed to unite in a chorus of praise to Him who has created such excellent and glorious things.

The road from this bridge to Baniâs passes by Tell-el-Kady (the Hill of the Judges), a hill with ruins which only within a few years has been recognised as the city of Dan, which the children of Dan conquered, and called after the name of their father, the name of the city having formerly been Leshem.* The Bible expression, "from Dan even to Beer-Sheba,"† is familiar to all of us. Dan reminds us also of the idolatry of Jeroboam, who caused, here and at Bethel, two golden calves to be set up.‡ Josephus and Jerome give us some details regarding the position of Dan. It is here that the Jordan has one of its three sources, of which Mr Thomson, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. iii. p. 196, gives such a graphic description. I stopped for a quarter of an hour on the top of the hill, at the base of which the Jordan waters break forth from underneath the lava cliffs, expanding first into a wide basin, and then flowing southward, where, not far from Tell-Dufneh, they unite with the two other branches which come down from Baniâs and Hâsbeiya. The river then winds through the marshy plain, occasionally lost in its numberless pools, until at last it reaches the lake.

After an hour's ride over an ascending tract covered with fields and oak thickets, I reached Baniâs. About Baniâs something more hereafter, when we shall have

* Joshua xix. 47; Judges xviii. 27–29. † Judges xx. 1, &c.
‡ 1 Kings xii. 28, 29.

visited the castle. This is probably the last place in my journey of which we know that it was visited by our Lord Jesus.* The works of mercy and wonders wrought by Him in the villages of Cesarea Philippi belong to those of which St John tells us: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book;"† but of that which is written, he adds, "but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name." I then asked myself, What has been written of Jesus with regard to Cesarea Philippi? The evangelists inform us that here the Lord asked His disciples whom the people said that He was, and whom the disciples said that He was? Of the former, the answer was, "John the Baptist; but some said Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." But "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Remarkable difference!

The multitudes who had seen the wonders which the Lord everywhere wrought, and had experienced His unequalled compassion, in the healing of their sick, and had heard all "the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth,"‡ were convinced that a great prophet had risen again among them. At times they stood amazed at all they heard and saw; at times, too, they glorified God on account of it; but with all this it never came to more than the mere acceptance of Jesus as a prophet. There were some who had heard

* Matt. xvi. 13; Mark viii. 27; Luke ix. 18. † John xx. 20–31.
‡ Luke iv. 22.

His words, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near at hand," but who, in that voice, had only recognised the call to repentance of John the Baptist, or the entreaties of Elijah to return from Baal unto the living God. Others there were who meant in Jesus to recognise Jeremiah and his "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."* And again, others held Him to be a prophet in the power of Elisha, or one of the ancients, whose words were confirmed by Jehovah by mighty signs. But there was no acknowledging of Him as the promised Christ, the Messiah that should come into the world, the Saviour of sinners, and the Prince of Peace. Notwithstanding all the signs they beheld, they asked Him, "What sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?" And after all that the Lord had said to them, they came to this conclusion, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" †

And the disciples, what did they say about the Lord?

God's Spirit had taught them. They confessed Him to be the Christ, the Son of God. He was to them the Saviour, the Anointed One. They had accepted it, "That God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believed on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How He should save them, was not yet revealed unto them; but they believed that they should receive salvation and eternal life freely through His hand. They sought their salvation in Him, and in Him alone.

The multitude honoured Jesus much, followed him

* Jeremiah iii. 22. † John vi. 30–42.

even so as nearly to crush him; but Jesus never appeared more to them than a prophet. The disciples received Him as the Christ, the Son of God. To each of them it was according to their faith.

Oh! if we, under all circumstances, and at all times, would put to ourselves that question of Jesus, "Whom say ye that I am?" True, the heart should have often to answer, "John, or one of the prophets," even when it knows better; but still, the recollection that Jesus is the unchangeable Christ, would continually pour new life into the wearied soul. For, once more, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through His name."

I hear travellers approaching. I suppose it is Mr Thomson with his companion, so I must lay down the pen. I shall soon take it up again.

CHURBI, *28th May.*

Whilst breakfast was being made this morning, I walked with Mr Thomson to the source of the Jordan. Its waters rush forth from under the base of a high rock, which, in former days, seems to have made a part of the temple of Pan; after which the city was called Paneas. The Arabs have since turned it into Baniâs. Josephus is the first who gives us a description of this fountain.* He describes it as hidden in a deep cavern, which was covered over by a huge rock. But since the days of the Jewish historian, this rock has undergone great changes; for the cavern is now no

* *Jewish Antiq.* xv. 10. 3.

more concealed under the rock, nor is the depth of its water in any way considerable, there being nothing more than a large hole full of dirty blackish water; and with regard to the overhanging rock, and the temple of Pan, which was connected with it, earthquakes have long since thrown them down. About twenty feet lower than this hole, the water now rushes forth, apparently from underneath the rock; but Mr Thomson who has several times examined the place, observed to me that the fountain in the grotto of Josephus was probably choked up by the rubbish of the temple, and that, consequently, the water now makes itself a way through the little openings and crevices of the rubbish. I advise you to read in the above quoted volume of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Mr Thomson's own description of Baniâs, and of the Jordan fountains. You will find in the same volume a copy of the four inscriptions in the rock near the source. It is proved from these inscriptions, as well as from Josephus, that Baniâs was built by Philip the tetrarch, and was called Cesarea, in honour of the emperor, the name of Panias being added to it to distinguish it from Cesarea on the coast. Cesarea Panias, or Cesarea Philippi was afterwards enlarged and embellished by Agrippa, and after Nero, was called Neronias. The Crusaders gave it the name of Belenas. The present Baniâs is a mere wretched village, inhabited by Moslems, Druses, and a few Christians, and governed by a Shech, who is subject to the Emir of Hâsbeiya. But if the village itself is insignificant, its ruins on the other hand are full of interest. In several places, one can yet trace the course of the walls of the ancient fortress of Cesarea Philippi,

and their colossal construction gives us a good idea of the works which, in centuries long gone by, were raised by the Romans. The present desolation offers a melancholy sight. The ancient aqueducts, roads, and bridges, are all destroyed; the water from the rich fountain of the rock of Pan, runs in all directions through the village, so that one cannot even walk through its streets with dry feet. This water is turned to no account whatever. The bed of the river begins to be formed at the western end of the village, and conducts a large quantity of water down to the stream, which comes from Tell-el-Kady; but not a small portion runs waste over the land, where it is lost in the gravelly soil. It is from this large quantity of water that Baniâs is surrounded by such an abundance of wood. The village lies almost hidden among the foliage. Here, again, is one of those spots where the promises of God present themselves to the mind; what excellency will Palestine display, when the time of God's mercies upon His people Israel shall have come!

My sketch of the rock of Pan and its fountain being finished, there remained now to ascend the proud castle of Baniâs, which lies on the high and steep rock to the north-east of the village. This rock is one of the projections of Mount Hermon, which rises with its deep ravines and thickly wooded slopes immediately behind Baniâs. The village itself is 1300 feet above the level of the sea,* and the castle on the rock rises at least 1500 feet higher. You may, therefore, imagine what a magnificent panorama one enjoys from that elevation. I counted about forty important points when taking

* According to a measurement with the Aneroid, taken by Dr de Forest.

my observations from it,—amongst others, the castles of Shukîf and Hunîn. On the east side the view is intercepted by the high ridges of Hermon; here we look down upon fearful precipices, or up towards gigantic mountains, well calculated to impress us with the royal splendour of the Jebel-es-Shech, the king of Palestine's mountains.

To ascend to the castle of Baniâs is now no easy matter. There is no pathway, properly speaking, except at the foot of the mountain; but on ascending a little higher it disappears, and one is obliged to find his way through rocks and thickets the best way he can. When the steepness does not oblige you to stop much on your way, you may reach the castle after an hour's ascent. Mr Thomson's description of this formidable citadel leaves me little to add. In a part of the fortress you may trace the work of the Romans, but you may see at the same time that the Romans have only built upon the ruins of a former castle. The walls of this fortress surpass in thickness and circumference those of all similar buildings in the country. I could not help feeling amazed at a sight of these gigantic stones, gates, vaults, tanks, and so on. What a mind it must have been that conceived such works! But still, how much more powerful that hand which, in a single moment, destroys the most colossal of human productions! Only one earthquake—and behold how those immense buildings lie thrown one upon another, as if the giant-works had been mere chaff blown upon by the wind!

Whilst I was wandering among these ruins, Dr R. and Mr T. had gone to lake Phiala, a wonderful pool

in the mountains, at about an hour and a half's journey from the castle. Among the natives, it is known as Birket-er-Râm. How the water in this bowl never rises nor lowers, whether the winter rains come down and pour into it, or whether summer drought causes elsewhere the waters to dry up; how the story of Josephus that the Jordan fountain of Pan receives its waters from this pool, has geologically been proved to be an impossibility; and other particulars besides, all this you may know from the above quoted report of Mr Thomson.

Before I invite you to accompany me to Churbi, I must tell you that this course lies altogether out of my original plan. My intention was to take from Baniâs the highway to Damascus; but this road is now so unsafe, that I could not find people to accompany me. The country is over-run by the revolted Druses, who have chosen rather to leave their villages and properties in Lebanon, than to submit to the conscription. The greater part have betaken themselves to the Hhauran mountains. But a number of them rove about wherever there is a chance of obtaining plunder, especially on the highways from Baniâs, Jisr-Benat-Yakûb, or Hâsbeiya, to Damascus. Not that I fear they would attack a man who travels under English protection, for the Druses entertain a great esteem and friendship for the English; but the rebels have joined themselves with the Bedouïns of the East-Jordan country, and from the mercies of the latter I have very little hope. Moreover, even if I had been inclined to venture in the experiment, it would have been impossible, not even by means of baksheesh, to prevail upon a muleteer to accompany me from Baniàs to Damascus;

so I have been obliged "to make the best of a bad bargain." And I intend, to-morrow morning, to cross the Leontes, and by Jebel-Rihân to ascend Lebanon, and find a more northerly way to Damascus.

On my return from the castle to the village, the two American travellers had left. But two Druses, who had come hither with Mr Thomson from Hâsbeiya, still remained talking with my servants. They had recognised me, and were thereby reminded of what had taken place at Hâsbeiya a few months ago. I was somewhat surprised to hear them speak about the affair of the robbery, and still more when they assured me with many solemn oaths that the Emir of Hâsbeiya himself had had a hand in it, and that some of the stolen articles had been seen in the possession of one of the members of his family. Judging from the particulars which they gave me, I cannot but think that there was some truth in what they said. However, be this as it may, the best course seemed to me not to detain myself on account of it, but rather to pursue my journey without delay.

By the way of Tell-el-Kady, the bridge el-Ghujar, the ruins of Abel-Beth-Maächah,* now called Abil, then along by the brook Mtelleh, and past the village Mtelleh, and finally right across the plain of Ijon (the Merj-Ajûn), I arrived in this village. I chose it in order to have a convenient place for the night, close by the Leontes, that I may to-morrow morning at once cross the river on my way to Jebel-Rihân. Churbi, however, rather disappoints me. It is a miserable village, where I have difficulty in getting either bread

* 2 Sam. xx. 14, 15; 1 Kings xv. 20; 2 Chron. xvi. 4; 2 Kings xv. 29.

or other necessaries. The inhabitants are not unkind, but poor, and seem to have nothing more than sufficient to supply their absolute daily necessities. Churbi lies out of the track of travellers; so, of course, the natives neither expect them, nor prepare themselves for their arrival. The people of this hamlet are Greek Catholics. Their priest, a man of much natural amiability, came to visit me with a large company; this was very civil, but at the same time troublesome, as it was quite late before I got rid of these simple, but, alas! very ignorant, villagers. How much do I regret that I still understand so little Arabic, as I cannot talk with these people without the aid of an interpreter! Happily the Gospel begins to penetrate more and more into this part of the land. Who can tell what enjoyment Christian travellers may soon find in a visit to Churbi?

JEZZÎN, *30th May.*

This is the day of Pentecost, and I am enabled to spend the festival in a most lovely place. Jezzîn is a large village, situated, as I think, upwards of 5000 feet high, in Lebanon, and almost due east of Sidon. I am now no more among hateful Moslems, but among Christians. True, they have not that knowledge of Christ which the Gospel teaches; but, at any rate, they have the name of Christians, in common with myself, and even this is something, though far from being what we would wish. My tent is pitched at the side of a gurgling brook, clear as crystal, in a park of majestic walnut-trees. The sun penetrates here only so much as is necessary to absorb the humidity of the

atmosphere; but apart from that, the high branches of the trees form a canopy in the shadow of which I should like to spend the whole summer, did my labours not call me elsewhere.

But let me first describe to you my yesterday's journey, and how I came here.

When I awoke, the sky was covered with black clouds which seemed ready to discharge themselves in heavy showers of rain. The Castle of Shukîf frowned upon me as on that dismal day in December when I ventured, with William Thomson, to climb its lofty walls. How is it, thought I, that this spot should always bring me misfortune? It is now summer, and at this time of the year rain is never heard of. Is it to be my fate to be here once more overtaken by a thunderstorm? I consulted the people of Churbi. No, they said, it will not rain; a single shower is possible, but you may be assured there will be no continued stormy weather. Well, then, thought I, I may venture. Accordingly, I had the mules laden, and descended the steep Leontes gorge. When we reached the bottom, and had got to the banks of the stream, drops began to fall. A single shower would suffice to wet us in a short time through and through. The sky was dark as night, just as on that afternoon when we left the Castle of Belfort for Hâsbeiya. The remembrance of that painful evening made me shiver; but my courage revived at the thought of the preservation and deliverance I had experienced. And, behold, the rain drops ceased, the sky began to clear up; I sat down to take a sketch of the magnificent scenery by which I was surrounded, and by the time I had finished it, the

clouds had dispersed, and a bright blue sky promised a continuance of fair weather.

Places where we have been in danger, or have experienced deliverances, are, in the great journey of life, so many monuments to the faithfulness and loving-kindness of God. You know, my friend, I might raise in many a spot of this wide world such Ebenezers, and the Jisr-Chardeli over the Leontes, at the foot of the Castle of Shukîf, is assuredly one of them. The recollection of the long series of troubles and dangers which I had struggled through from the moment that I passed that river for the first time; the retrospect of all that God had done for me during that period; how He had sometimes brought me into great depths, but only for my good; and how in the midst of distress He had always displayed His faithfulness and power in the most glorious manner; how He had brought me back to this very place in perfect safety;—all this deeply affected me. Alas! short-sighted and suspicious creatures, we rarely see God's dealings in their true light. Our soul is continually cleaving to the dust, and whenever the Lord in His love disconcerts our plans, humbles our pride, brings us into all manner of straits, to teach us our dependence on Him, to give us a distaste for the flighty enjoyments of this transitory world, and to fix our affections on things above, on Himself, and on Jesus Christ, then we disown His hand and His heart, hard thoughts with respect to Him get the better of us, we impatiently struggle against His appointments and judge our condition to be irreconcilable with the testimony He gives of Himself in His Word. Had we never experienced His love, it were no

wonder that such thoughts respecting the Lord should rise in the corrupt heart; but, ah! who on looking back upon the way he has travelled, must not give God the glory, and must not testify with respect to every past day?—

Lord! still thou wouldst with grace surround me,
Lord! still thy more than father's heart
Hast with the richest blessings crown'd me,
So merciful thou ever art!
Thy faithful arm would still enfold me,
Thy hand me nourish and me lead,
Present when falling to uphold me,
Present to help in time of need.

Yes, truly may we feel ashamed at so much unbelief, impatience, and distrust. But let our experience at the same time teach us to believe Him more, trust Him more, and love Him more than we ever have done before.

Arrived at the north side of the river, instead of taking the steep mountain path up to Arnûn, we followed the bends and windings of the roaring stream for some distance up, through a cultivated plain, which we afterwards crossed in order to enter the wadi of Yermak. The Leontes here is pretty broad, and though its bed is narrower than that of the Jordan, its waters rush forward with far more force than the Jordan's. The difference between the vegetation on the sides of the two rivers is also remarkable. Along the banks of the Leontes it is all sycamores and oleanders; along those of the Jordan, on the contrary, in the hot Ghor, it is willows and tamarisks, which only, higher up, close to the springs of Dan, Cesarea Philippi, and Hâsbeiya, make way for a similar margin

to that of the Leontes. The great difference in the climate of the districts traversed by the two streams, naturally leads to a great difference in the trees and plants found on their borders.

From the Leontes to Jezzîn my way led through a mountainous district, which for beauty and magnificence has nothing equal to it in Palestine. Whatever you may see elsewhere, there are no such views, there is no such scenery as along the Jebel Rihân, and on the way from Jermak by Jurjûa and Jebea to Jezzîn; nay, I may even assert that I have travelled in no part of the world where I have beheld such a variety of glorious mountain-scenes within so narrow a compass. Not the luxurious Java, not the richly-wooded Borneo, not the majestic Sumatra or Celebes, not the Paradise-like Ceylon, far less the grand but naked mountains of South Africa, or the low impenetrable woods of the West Indies, are to be compared to the southern projecting mountains of Lebanon. In yonder lands all is green, or all is bare. An Indian landscape has something monotonous in its super-abundance of wood and jungle, that one wishes in vain to see intermingled with rocky cliffs or with towns and villages. In the bare table lands of the Cape Colony, the eye discovers nothing but rocky cliffs; trees and forests are wanting, and there are parts where one may travel for hours together without meeting with a single human being or human habitation. It is not so, however, with the southern ranges of Lebanon. Here there are woods and mountains, streams and villages, bold rocks and green cultivated fields, land and sea views; here, in one word, you find all combined that the eye could

desire to behold on this earth. I feel, indeed, that to describe these districts to you in a manner at all near the truth, would require the pen to be guided by another hand than mine. Where shall I find words to describe to you my impressions of the Jebel Rihân? All the expressions we are wont to employ in every-day life, fall short here. They are no every-day scenes that are witnessed; how then should every-day words suffice for their description? The very best descriptions would, I believe, here fall short. Would you indeed like to know Mount Lebanon? then there is but one way to do so, —you must come and see.

But, feeble and faulty though the attempt may prove, still I must tell you something about the road along the Jebel Rihân.

Fancy yourself, then, my fellow-traveller—I would say, fancy yourself riding at my side. But, dear friend, the path is often so narrow that there is no room to admit of two persons riding abreast, and common politeness forbids my assuming that you are to ride behind me, while, nevertheless, I must, as your guide, ride in front. Thus I must just say, Fancy yourself my fellow-traveller. Well, we leave the vale of the Leontes, and enter, amid corn-fields and olive gardens, a gradually ascending valley, called the wadi of Jermak from the Druse village of Jermak, situated in its bosom about an hour and a half's distance from the bridge el-Chardeli. Jermak is in itself of no importance, but just look now at that hill that rises on the right hand side. The villagers call it Jebel Sidi. Are not those oak woods on its steep slopes truly beautiful? It is the commencement of the Rihân range.

Take a draught now from the fountain beneath this weeping willow; give the little lad who handed you the pitcher a half or a whole piastre, according as the draught pleased you, and now come forth; we have no time to lose.

Shall we not halt for a little at those ruins, do you ask?

No, my friend, I answer, we have no time. Here are some peasants who will be able to tell us their name, and let that be enough.

Meidani.

Now, Meidani, do you hear? I will put it down in my pocket-book. Forward now! See how narrow the valley here becomes, and how majestically the wooded crags of Rihân tower aloft along our path. What a solemn feeling creeps over us! What wonderful impressions do these scenes create!

And that forest-stream that comes rolling onwards from yonder gorge?

That is the Zaharani which you may remember as no inconsiderable river between Sidon and Sarepta. What a roaring it makes! What rocks! What wild groups of sycamores and other wood, that seem as if they fain would hide from view the foaming water. Our path becomes every moment wilder and wilder. It seems even . . . . I know not well, but it strikes me . . . . yes, to be sure, we are off the right road. The path by which we are now clambering up this steep slope is nothing but a goat track; it will soon bring us to a place where goats alone can find a way, but where we should be sure to break our necks. It is bad enough where we are at present. How shall we contrive to turn?

Fortunately yonder is a water-mill; we shall find people there to shew us the road.

What says that man?

That we must here cross the Zaharani brook, and will find the foot-path to Jurjûa on the other side. Who could ever have suspected that the way leads across this mountain stream without trace or indication of any kind!"

Well, now, my dear friend, what think you of this path? Do you observe how steadily we are ascending? And what a narrow road! I am in constant dread lest my horse, which is none of the most sure-footed, may make a mistake, and the whirling abyss below is not to be trifled with. I know not how the poor mules with their bulky lading are to make their way through the thicket without taking a false step and falling into the roaring stream. I dare hardly venture to look at them. But here I see walnut-trees; we cannot now be far from Jurjûa. How far is it still, mukhari?

If you had the wings of a bird, sir, you could fly to the village in five minutes. It lies here close above your head. But I cannot tell how much time it may cost to climb up this cursed rock with the poor horses and mules.

The climb costs us, in fact, three quarters of an hour's time. We now understand why the mukhari called the hill of Jurjûa a cursed rock. Jurjûa is a pretty large village, and is inhabited by Eastern Christians. The villagers treat us with the utmost friendliness. Some beg we will pass the whole day with them; others tell us about the American missionaries, the

only travellers who have visited this district, and others again offer us sour milk (lebban) and coffee. The day, however, advances; we are not yet where we wish to be, and must therefore politely decline the offers of these kind folks.

Must there be no angles measured here, then? Look at the position of the point we are upon. The whole of northern Canaan lies at our feet. Is not this Sidon? Are not those Surafend and Tyre, and Ras-el-Abiad? I see also the Castle of Shukîf, and the gorge of the Leontes, and Tibnîn, and the hills of Safed, and yonder in the distance, the basin of the Sea of Tiberias with the hills of Bashan, far, far away. And all these hundreds of villages between the spot we are at, and the sea-coast, is it possible to pass this with indifference?

No, certainly not, my friend, but the angles of all these places have been already measured by Dr Smith; I would, therefore, rather give up the measurements; for half a day would not suffice me for taking the angles of such an ocean of villages, towns, castles, rivers, hills, and capes. You know how much difficulty it costs to obtain the right names of places from the natives, when there are so many places within sight. Forward, then, and farewell to Jurjûa.

Now, open your eyes well, for what they now see on the way from Jurjûa to Jebea, they will probably never see any more. Mark well the woods on the steep slopes on your right. Forget not their variety of leaves and branches, of colours and forms. Forget not either the Alpine flowers among the copse. Meanwhile, keep a good bridle-hand on your horse, for these

dizzy depths on the left of our narrow path are not without danger. Have you ever seen such valleys? It seems as if the mountains had been rent asunder. At the bottom of these chasms, mountain torrents rush along with a deafening noise, while hamlets and villages seem to hang on the almost inaccessible slopes above the sombre cliffs below. Do you observe how the mountain-tops become gradually lower and lower in proportion as they approach the coast? And how the dark-green of the foreground passes off into the light yellow of the remote corn-fields, or into the dusky blue of the hill-slopes that are in the shade? What above all things is remarkable, is the infinite variety of the scenery that surrounds us. Whether our winding path takes us over a height or through a gorge; whether it passes by a projecting rock or makes a bend into a ravine, where for a short time it seems entirely to disappear; whether we are enclosed in woods, or emerge into open day, where the eye can command distances of more than two days' travelling, —at every turn we have a change; there is ever something new to attract and to ravish. Bear in mind, too, the fertility of these mountains. Look at the terraces, cultivated with rich vineyards; see with what difficulty the clusters are supported by branches and stakes. Where saw you ever such grapes, so large in size and in such enormous clusters? Look at the mulberry gardens on those other terraces down below. These are reared, not for the sake of their fruit, as with us, but of their leaves for the feeding of silk-worms, the breeding of which now begins to form so important a branch of industry in Lebanon. But your eye has

not gauged the lowest path. It has descended from the vineyard terraces to those of the mulberry-trees, and from that it descends to a number of other terraces, one in succession below the other. On some of those lower terraces you see pasture land and cattle grazing, on others the grayish colour of the trees betrays the cultivation of the olive, on others you see the pale leaves of the poplar, or the golden green of the pomegranate, and in yonder trees with their thick, dark, and elegant crowns, you recognise the walnut, which I would call the king among the trees in Palestine. We have now come to the corner of a rock, and, behold, an entirely different scene at once presents itself. In front of us is a mountain amphitheatre with steep walls of a yellowish colour, streaked with brown veins. You instantly recognise the sandstone formation; and the wood that thrives best on sandy ground, the fir or pine-tree, in spite of the steepness of these hills, firmly inserts its roots between the cliffs.

And what large village is that, with an old castle on the top of a hill among these beautiful walnut-trees?

That is Jebea. The castle is a relic of modern times. It was built probably by the Turks, or perhaps by the Saracens, after the expulsion of the Crusaders. What think you,—it is now two o'clock; shall we make a brief halt here beside this small brook? If you will look to the unlading of the canteen and the preparation of a cup of coffee, I will meanwhile get out my sketch-book, and take a view of this charmingly situated village.

* * * * * * * *

Come on now! Hurrah for the last ascent!

Philip and Theodori will take care of the canteen; we may go on at a slow pace. The Jebel Rihân we shall have soon done with, and we ascend now gradually the higher ranges of the proper Lebanon. The woods, too, diminish, and at last altogether disappear; while the path with many a turn, many an ascent and many a descent, winds onwards. At the small village of Sehalti, we shall for security's sake take a guide, to shew us the road up the last height; for there is often a risk here of breaking your neck, whilst among the rough, bare, gray limestone rocks it is far from easy to distinguish the path.

Truly this last part of the way is fatiguing. Shall we never reach the top? What a frowning wall does Lebanon here present! And what frightful precipices below!

Yes, my friend, the way is fatiguing. But travelling in Lebanon is always difficult—chiefly, too, on account of the wretched state of the paths along the rocks. But yet a little patience, and we shall have our to-day's work all done. Let me in the meantime direct your attention to that conical hill down below there to the left. That is the Rummiet-Roum, where I stood measuring angles a few months ago. I was then at a considerable elevation, as it appeared to me; but now that summit lies below, for here we are nearly twice as high. Do you see Sidon? We have had it almost constantly in sight since leaving Jurjûa; yet never so plainly as now. It looks as if it were but a step from the mountain we are standing on to that city; but did we make the attempt to be to-night under the same roof with Dr Van Dyck or Mr Thomson, we should find

ourselves very much mistaken with respect to the distance. Meanwhile, to see Sidon once more, where I have spent so many days of peace and happiness, and of struggle and trial too, brings the tears to my eyes. . . . .

But here we have reached the highest point of the gigantic gray rocky wall. What a totally different world these masses of naked limestone rock, from the wooded slopes between Jurjûa and Jebea! Let us follow this lofty ridge one half-hour more, and we shall obtain a view of Jezzîn.

Is that it? What a surprising sight! How picturesque the position of that village, embosomed amid verdant enclosures and thick crowned walnut-trees in the midst of that basin of rocks!

Yes, my friend, this is Jezzîn. I now bid you welcome in this Upper Lebanon region. To-morrow we shall inspect the village at our convenience, but we have travelled enough for to-day. We now need repose, and we are invited to it by our tent beneath those lofty trees.

Jezzîn, situated fully 5000 feet above the level of the sea, in a wide rocky basin of the Lebanon mountains, nearly due east from Sidon, is a considerable village inhabited by Maronites. It is well built; the houses have this in common with most other villages in Lebanon, that they are much better and cleaner than the holes and huts of so many of the villages in the south. Through the middle of the village there flows a stream which rises in a lofty summit to the south-east, and after precipitating itself into an abyss on the north-west side of Jezzîn with a fall of 240 feet, shortly

afterwards unites with the Auwly river, which comes from the north-east. The inhabitants of Jezzîn live mostly by the rearing of silk-worms. The houses are surrounded with mulberry-trees, and there is hardly a dwelling where one does not meet with something or another in connexion with this branch of industry. Large flat round plates or dishes, composed of dried cow-dung, are seen almost everywhere. It is on these plates that the silk-worms live, and are daily supplied with mulberry leaves cut from the trees, branches and all. On these plates they finally spin their cocoons. These are removed at the proper time, and sent off to one or other of the silk manufactories in Lebanon, which are already numerous, and constantly increasing in number; or to the market of Beirût, where they are readily bought up for the silk manufactories of the south of France.

The holiday I have spent to-day at Jezzîn has been to me, in many respects, a real feast-day. From sultry plains I have come into a cool, reviving, salubrious, mountain atmosphere; from bare, sun-scorched districts to refreshing shade; from rude, sullen Moslems, or plundering, blood-thirsty Bedouïns, to comparatively civilized and friendly Christians. One thing only grieves me, and that is that I must so soon leave Jezzîn. How willingly would I tabernacle here somewhat longer! I have had no want of visitors. During the whole day there has been something doing. Many have come offering what they thought would prove agreeable to a traveller. One brought me fresh bread; another came with a bottle of the best Lebanon wine; a third sent his children with bunches of roses. And here it has been no

baksheesh speculation, for I could hardly prevail upon the children to take a small present in return. The adults would not hear of payment. I was struck with the kindness of these people. How could I recompense them? I made an attempt to begin a conversation with some of them on the one thing needful. Some listened with attention, but others seemed to dread coming upon that subject. A monk, for example, belonging to the Jezzin convent, a person of much natural amiability, listened to what I had to say for some considerable time, first with apparent indifference, but at last with evident uneasiness. He tried for a time to refute what I said by the anti-scriptural principles of his doctrine; but as it was not difficult to convince him of his errors by adducing first one and then another passage of Scripture, he could think of nothing better at last than to reply, that his patriarch had forbidden him to speak to any one on religious matters. Poor people! How bitter is that kind of oppression which holds the souls of men in captivity! We often burn with indignation when we hear of the slave trade and slavery. Alas! that we should overlook the worst of all sorts of slavery, that which keeps men's souls bound fast in the chains of darkness! And yet how great and how extensive is this violence done to men's souls! How few are the countries where these bands are broken! Truly, had we our thoughts more fixed on these things, we should exert ourselves more to make ALL men participate in the privileges that have fallen to our lot! Those soul-oppressors, those spiritual tyrants, have long had the woe against themselves. "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of know-

ledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." * But if we admit that such poor oppressed persons can rightly be called souls kept imprisoned by men, then it behoves us to look well to it that these words do not apply to us:—"Depart from me, for I was in prison and ye visited me not." † May the Lord Himself open our eyes, and enable us to see from what a state of darkness we have been delivered, and at what a cost, in order that we thereby may be more powerfully incited to proclaim to others that mercy which has been bestowed upon ourselves, and which is to be obtained by all!

DAMASCUS, *3d June.*

Three days' travelling has brought me from Jezzîn by the circuitous route I have taken, by Tell-Thata, to this great city. It is from an upper apartment in André's hotel that I briefly communicate to you an account of this journey.

I left Jezzîn with the wish that, in the course of my wandering life, I might once more visit that lovely spot. Tell-Thata, a small hamlet, yet deriving importance from the ruins of an ancient temple, was, for that day, the object of my journey. It lies on the west side of the valley between Hermon and Lebanon, separated, however, from the latter by the Leontes. My map will fully shew you its position. To reach it, I might have taken more than one road, by one of the high passes of Lebanon, but as I had, at all events, to cross the Leontes, I chose a path leading to the natural bridge, el-Kûweh, a point at which that

* Luke xi. 52. † Matth. xxv. 41, 43.

river is wilder than anywhere else in its impetuous course. This was nowise the nearest road, but it was the richest in mountain scenery. After leaving Jezzîn, I found myself for several hours in a world of nothing but rocks, waste and barren, with the exception of here and there a spot of cultivated ground or a vineyard. On my left the prospect was intercepted by the two conical summits called Tomat-Niha, round the base of which the road afterwards wound. The lower world —I mean the lesser heights lying between Lebanon and the sea — came into view on my right, wherever the rocks opened as I advanced; but, generally speaking, the prospect was confined on that side by a lofty wall of rock. The path at last ran up a very steep slope; and, after half an hour's hard work, we reached the highest point of the mountain pass. It was a striking moment. What a contrast! The whole of Palestine lay at once at my feet. The elevation of this point is considerable, and the prospect on all sides free and uninterrupted. The royal Hermon, whose top was still covered with fields of snow as with so many broad, white, glistening furrows, rose immediately before me. His woods appeared to unite with those of Lebanon in the deep hollow at my feet. Farther off, blue Carmel and the mountains of Gilead towered aloft. Galilee, with the dark shaded gorge of the Leontes, with all its castles and ruins, with its high ridges of Blât, Safed, and Jermak, with its mirror-like waters of Merom and Tiberias, with its Tabor and surrounding plains, how clearly and distinctly did all this lie stretched out before me, as if delineated on a map! Beirût and Sidon, although

situated at no great distance, lay hid behind rocks. Tyre, on the other hand, was seen house by house, and you may conceive to what a distance the prospect extended when I tell you that even the mountains of Cyprus were plainly distinguishable on the far horizon. I reckon this mountain pass to be 6500 feet above the level of the sea. The prospects presented by this panorama would be of incalculable value for a representation of Palestine. It would, however, be a matter of no small difficulty to execute a minute painting of all that is to be seen from this lofty point. Nevertheless, did time and circumstances permit, I would cheerfully endure a great deal of labour to accomplish such a work.

A long and tedious crooked path among rocks and bushes brought me to the little village of 'Ain-Tineh (the fountain of the fig-trees). No fig-trees, however, did I find there so pre-eminently large and beautiful as to justify their giving its name to the place; but there was a large walnut-tree, beneath the shade of which we refreshed ourselves with some most excellent sour milk. This beverage is found, during summer, at almost all the villages of Palestine, and at an exceedingly moderate price. It is certainly the most cooling thing that one can take, and comprises both meat and drink at the same time. But I am not of the opinion of the Arabs, who have a proverb that sour milk can give life to the dead, for I have found by sour experience that sour milk may easily give death to the living, when, overheated and exhausted with the glowing heat of the sun and a long journey, he does not practise great caution in using the much renowned *lebban*. While pass-

ing the sultry noontide hour in the shadow of the walnut-tree, some people collected around us, and these assured us, every one more positively than another, that it was impossible for the laden mules to pass over the Kûweh. The rocks, they said, were piled up in such a manner, that you will find great difficulty to get over yourself. I was silly enough to believe them, and, on the assurance of one of these thievish rascals that he knew a place where we could pass the river safely, and was willing to be our guide—of course in consideration of a baksheesh — I accepted his services, and set off under his guidance to the Leontes, which, at the distance of three quarters of an hour from 'Ain-Tîneh, whirls along in the hidden deep of its rocky channel. It soon appeared that all the fellow had alleged, was deception. The road was good and wide, and not at all a path known to himself alone, but the common highway from Sidon, over the Kûweh-bridge to Damascus. The lively picture he had drawn to us of the almost insurmountable rocks and cliffs we were to encounter, was a mere trick in order to possess himself of some piastres.

You see, my friend, that all my experience among this people has not sufficiently taught me how to escape their lies and artifices.

Mr Thomson had some time ago told me much of the natural bridge over the Leontes. It is clearly seen at this spot that the river, in ages of a remote antiquity, has formed, from its bed in the high situated plain of Cœlo-Syria, a way down for itself through the chasm by which the eastern base of Lebanon has been rent throughout its entire length. This trough or groove

has been gradually deepened and widened, so as to form the bed along which the foaming waters now rush forth. At some points, the trough, thus worn in the mountains, is so narrow that one may, without danger, jump across from one side to the other. The Kûweh presents a place where the rocks have not been rent, but where the water has made a way for itself through the solid masses below. The gorge at this place has a truly frightful aspect. The rocks thrown in the wildest manner one upon another, and the thundering roar and tumult of the waters in the dark abyss, which is occasionally hidden by the foliage of sycamores and wild fig-trees,—no pen can adequately describe such a spectacle in all its wildness and grandeur.

The sun was already low when I reached Tell-Thata, —happily not too low to bathe in the richest light the ruins of the temple. As my sketch will give you an idea of those ruins and of the splendid appearance of Mount Hermon on the back-ground, I may dispense with any description. I once more met here with my friends, the missionaries, Messrs Thomson and Wortabet, who had accompanied Dr Robinson from Hâsbeiya to this place. Now, however, Mr Thomson's operations called him back to Sidon, while Mr Wortabet was to accompany the learned traveller to Damascus.

Their purpose was to travel to the Syrian metropolis by Rachleh. On that road there are important ruins of a temple, and these the Professor wished to examine. As I was well convinced that a copious account of them would be given to the world by that traveller, I thought it would be of more consequence, for obtaining a further knowledge of the country, to pursue my way up the

valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, the so-called B'kaâ, or plain of Cœlo-Syria, before passing over to Damascus.

I therefore left Tell-Thata, or, as it is also called after a Moslem weli that has been built there, Nabi Suffa, early the following morning, and fixed upon the village of 'Aiteh, at the western base of Anti-Lebanon, for my station that night. I reached it without any further hindrance than what arose from the timidity of my mukhari; for it appeared as if the dread of being fallen upon by the Druses had completely got the better of him: he would not advance, but was constantly lagging behind, and grumbled the whole way, charging me with placing his life in danger by the road I had ventured upon. We had already the villages of Kefr-Muski and Kaukab behind us, and were passing Mheiti, where the people endeavoured to keep us from advancing further to the north. "Yesterday," they said, "we heard of a man from our village, who had set off with a laden ass for Damascus, being robbed and murdered at only three hours' distance from this. It is a reckless risking of your lives to attempt taking this road." You may imagine what an impression this made on the faint-hearted mule-driver. Theodori looked pale as death, and even Philip, who had shown till now the fullest confidence in his master, was in the utmost distress. Truly I knew not how to act with such a party of heroes. Fortunately the cat was soon out of the bag. Two of the very men who had given us such a frightful picture of the road to Damascus, offered themselves to us as guides, and then I saw at once how the matter stood. The deception practised by the man at 'Ain-

Tineh, who had so dexterously thrust himself on us as a guide, explained to me the fabrication of the murdered man and his ass. "Come on," I said to my people, "let us not tarry a moment longer here." But all my urging was of no avail. Philip was ever and anon lagging behind, under the pretext that his mule was to-day obstinately bent on making no progress; Theodori remained still farther behind with a chop-fallen look and a deafness now far worse than usual, at least such it seemed, for he says he heard nothing of my urgent calls to make haste; as for the mukhari, he was nearly out of sight altogether. Truly, had the roving Druses been disposed to attack us, they would have taken us at a complete disadvantage, by falling on each of us singly. Thus did we slowly pass Rafît and Bireh, and came about mid-day to Kamid-el-Lauz, a Moslem village in the B'kaâ, where, for a couple of hours, we found shelter under a large walnut-tree from the fierce rays of the sun. Here, for the first time, my little band began to recover from their fright, on our learning from the villagers that the danger was not so great, and that the Druses, even were we to encounter them, would not venture to attack a European, and above all an English traveller, as it was from the English that they rather looked for protection against the oppression of the Sultan.

We reached 'Aiteh some hours later, safe and sound.

That there was really some risk of our being attacked by the roving Druses, is, however, perfectly true. I learnt here that, in point of fact, an English traveller, a few days ago, had been assailed by a band of Druses between Damascus and the foot of Mount Hermon.

He was fortunate enough to escape unhurt, and without any of his effects being taken away from him, in consequence of his assailants having allowed him to pass on unmolested as soon as they heard to what nation he belonged. The Druses and the English, said they as usual, are brethren.

'Aiteh itself had been visited the night before by a band of Druses, who had plundered some families of all they possessed. Thus all the villages in Cœlo-Syria were in a state of alarm. One night the marauders attack this village, to-morrow they attack another; no man is any longer safe; the whole country is abandoned to robbery and murder. It is true the village chiefs of Lebanon have sent out an armed force to capture the insurgents; but I much doubt whether the men thus sent have any heartfelt wish to fight against their former fellow-villagers. Three men belonging to those thus sent out I met at 'Aiteh; but, though armed from head to foot, they had not been able to prevent the robbery of the preceding night. They had come to 'Aiteh when the plundering was all over.

The third day's travelling from Jezzîn brought me to Damascus. To me it was the most fatiguing day of all the three. The distance from 'Aiteh to Damascus costs a ride of ten hours, at the ordinary slow pace of from two and a half to three miles an hour. There is, moreover, little variety in the road, but, on the contrary, it goes steadily forward through the rocky valleys, and over the rocky mountain plains of the Anti-Lebanon. For the first three hours from 'Aiteh, the road is pretty good. One passes the pottery works on the east side of the village, and rides some way forward

over heights and through clefts in the mountains where there is a little vegetation. While it is yet early in the morning, while the air is still cool, and the light and shade of the masses of rock are so whimsical and fantastic in their effects, time fleets past before one is aware of it. But after you have passed the ruins of Monsia, and when the lonesome wadi-Bakeh has come to an end; when you have watered your horse at the fountain Khân-Beisamûl, whose waters run down past Mimes, the only village met with between 'Aiteh and Damascus; when by following many winding paths among the white limestone rocks, you have reached the endless mountain plateau, called by the Arabs Sahara—a bare hard level, where neither herb nor grass is to be seen except during the first days of the spring, when the gravelly soil is saturated by the winter rains, and when lovely flowers for a brief space of time adorn the ground; when the almost vertical mid-day sun looks down on you, and its fierce rays are reflected from the dry desert plain with a blinding heat and glare,—then, indeed, is the road to Damascus felt to be fatiguing and exhausting to the last degree; the wearied eye looks about in vain for some shadow to repose itself upon; and one knows not how to protect the head and face from the scorching heat, as well as from the unwonted intensity of the light. In the middle of the Sahara, the path leads across a small brook, where traces may be seen of old foundations, proving that there a khân must once have stood, and even the name of the spot, el-Khân, intimates as much. The shade and the shelter which the khân must have offered to the traveller in former days, have now departed. He has to travel

nearly two hours longer, always between naked white limestone rocks, while the pupil of his eye, more and more pained with light and the reflection of light, tries ever more and more to screen itself under the half-shut eyelids. Now he comes to the eastern upper edge of the Anti-Lebanon rocks; and Damascus, that great city with 200,000 inhabitants, with 366 mosques, and a still greater number of minarets, with its white or pale yellow plastered houses, with its sylvan environs presenting almost every kind of tree found in the East, with its rivers and rills, with its picturesque plain full of villages, gardens, and cultivated fields, lies at once at his feet! A greater contrast than that of the blinding white chalky hills of the Anti-Lebanon, and the green oasis of Damascus, of the lone dry rocks, and the finest and most populous city of the East, it is impossible to imagine. A single look at Damascus from this point appears at once to explain the tradition of the Moslems, that Paradise must have been here. But for the fatigue of the journey, one would feel inclined, like Mohammed when he approached Damascus for the first time, to sit down and abandon all idea of proceeding further, rather than lose the enjoyment of this ravishing sight. No wonder that the Syrians with such a city were a more haughty people than all the nations that surrounded Israel.

The hour that remained between my leaving the spot where I for the first time contemplated Damascus, and my reaching the gate of the great city, was an hour along water-brooks, and among all sorts of trees. Damascus is encircled with a girdle of villages and gardens, among which one is apt to fancy

himself lost, until he treads the streets. How willingly would I have pitched my tent somewhere in those gardens, so inviting did the shade of the apricot and walnut trees appear! but it is not usual for travellers to encamp there. There is a hotel in the city, and also convents, should people prefer going to them to lodging with Mr André. I allowed myself accordingly to be conducted to the hotel, which is in the centre of the city, at half an hour's distance from the gate. The streets along which I had to ride, formed a continuation of shops. Nowhere in the East had I seen so much activity; nowhere, shops so well provided or so gaily decked out. It was quite a new world to me. I felt that here the sumptuous descriptions of the East in the *Thousand and One Nights*, were actually realised. Among all the objects that surrounded me, I was especially struck with the superabundance of the "good things of this life." Damascus is supplied with the best of all kinds of meat and drink, and that in the richest abundance. The sherbet shops and the confectioners' counters crowd on one another. Water-works send forth their streams on all sides. There is not a coffee-house without a cool fountain bubbling up; not a spot where the atmosphere is not refreshed with water and shade. Then, what heaps of fruit, to the right and left, piled up in the fruit-shops! Pyramids of apricots, yellow and red from ripeness, the air perfumed with the smell of oranges,—fancy to yourself all this, and at the same time the thoroughly tired traveller as he passes through the streets, his tongue swollen with thirst, his head glowing with heat from the scorching it has under-

gone since early morning! Can you wonder when I tell you that after having ridden past many of these fruit-shops, I at last yielded to the temptation—that I halted and ate a few apricots before riding further? Alas! I had to suffer for my imprudence, for in the hotel I found apricots again, and also sour milk, in which I indulged to my subsequent regret.

I have reached Damascus, and may now repose myself for a few days after so many weeks of uninterrupted travelling. Perhaps you too may desire to rest a while from the reading of my letter. We shall thus both be gainers by my laying down the pen.

6th June.

After having spent five days in Damascus, I must now tell you something of my impressions in this cosmopolitan city. Do not be surprised at my remaining here only for a very short time, and intending to start anew early to-morrow morning. You know that my days in this country are now numbered, and I have still a long tour to accomplish between this place and Beirût. But even were it not so, I would willingly exchange the bustle of the city and the comforts of the hotel, for the glorious scenery of Lebanon and the life in my tent. You possibly wonder at this; you think perhaps that the luxuries of Damascus, after my solitary wanderings on mountains and in valleys, must be particularly welcome. You may have seen the marvellous wonder-city described with all the warmth of eastern picture, and are now expecting from me a description of the same sort. But, my dear friend, however rich in materials the subject may be, and however much there

remains to be written about Damascus that others have left unnoticed, I must not occupy myself with these things now. Forget not the object I had in visiting this place. I could not have considered my journeyings in Palestine complete, without having seen the city in the neighbourhood of which the threatening and slaughter-breathing Saul was transformed by the Lord of the Church into the apostle Paul, and within whose gates he remained in the house of Judas for three days, praying, and neither eating nor drinking, whilst without sight, in consequence of the brightness of the light from heaven that had shone upon him, until Ananias went, and, putting his hands upon him, said: Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* To know the general features and the situation of Damascus, was the chief motive which brought me hither. Had I a superabundance of time, assuredly I should feel no embarrassment as to the useful disposal of my days here. But the very opposite is the case, and I have to confine myself in my visits to Damascus to the object for which I crossed Anti-Lebanon. Now, an idea of the situation of Damascus and its environs, of its peculiar character, which, although changed from heathen to Mohammedan, has retained nevertheless much of its original features, is what one may obtain in a short time. Were I to remain here for weeks and months, it would be of

* Acts ix. 1–25.

no advantage to me in regard to these things. On the contrary, when to-morrow morning I shall have left the gate, I shall be able to say I was but a short time at Damascus, yet it was long enough.

Excuse me, therefore, for saying so little about a city which might supply matter for volumes. You yourself must feel that a description of Damascus does not fall within the compass of my travels. This you should rather expect from other travellers, such as make a pleasure trip to Cairo, Jerusalem, and Damascus, according to the fashion of our days;—travellers such as I have met at Jerusalem, and now again here, complaining yonder—I do not say without justice—of all the discomforts they had to endure; hurrying away from the holy city; and with still greater haste taking the shortest and most convenient way to Damascus, without caring much about the land of Israel; and, having once arrived in the luxurious metropolis of the East, seem to forget that they are on a journey and must soon return to their business and their homes. Not that I would in the least prescribe to travellers what things they ought to set their hearts and affections upon. Tastes differ, and in this matter every man is his own master. But whilst I freely allow others to have their own tastes, so may I reasonably expect the same privilege for myself. I therefore gladly leave the Damascus travellers, to lounge about the bazaars, indulge themselves in the sumptuous baths, smoke their chibouk in the company of Turks and Arabs in the airy coffee-houses along the river, sit on a shop-counter with heaps of shawls and embroidered silk stuffs spread out before them, and lost in the difficulty of choosing between the

brilliant colours and the elegant tissues, bid here for a Damascus blade of great value, or busy themselves yonder with the more peaceful articles in the shop of a pastry-cook or a fruit-merchant. As for me, without meaning in the least to depreciate the value of these things, I am satisfied with a few walks through the city, and even my purchases of some of the productions of the industry of Damascus, as presents and keepsakes for my friends, have been soon accomplished.

And the antiquities of Damascus—what of them?

These, it is true, are to be found in abundance; but neither does the investigation of them belong to my present object. The wall of Damascus exhibits many old remains; not, however, it appears to me, from the days of Hazael or Benhadad, but from those of the Roman empire. Both within and without the city one meets with a great many ancient hewn stones, pieces of columns, and fragments of walls and buildings, but it is everywhere so built over with houses of modern date, that I doubt whether archæologists will be able to decypher much from these ancient relics. As a matter of course, tradition points out a street called "Straight," * a house of Ananias, and a house of Judas, and, in fine, the place, too, where Saul was let down at night in a basket through the wall. I have found no reasons for holding these so-called "holy places" to what they are represented, but rather the reverse. Yet even were the matter put beyond doubt, the localities are so entirely altered that they do not help us in the smallest degree to represent to ourselves the important things recorded in the ninth chapter of Acts. The

* Acts ix. 11.

most remarkable piece of antiquity still existing, probably is the front part of a temple with colossal pillars of exquisite workmanship. It stands completely built in among the bazaar shops near the great mosque, formerly the church of John the Baptist, and is therefore not perceived in the street. A shopkeeper from whom I had bought some shawls, sent his son with me to point it out. We went into a house and climbed up to the flat roof, where I had the pillars close before me. The columns are almost entirely hidden by the masonwork of the adjoining houses. The beautifully-wrought capitals only stood out above the terrace-roof we were on.

In one other respect my cursory remarks on Damascus must be short, and that a point upon which I would willingly have been copious,—I refer to the missionary work among the Eastern Christians. But, in the first place, this work is only at its commencement; and, secondly, however important the subject might be, in consequence of the absence of some of the missionaries I was not able to obtain all the information which I could have wished to communicate to you. Four messengers of the Gospel are now labouring in Damascus, Messrs Robson, Porter, Paulding, and Fraser. The two first have been sent by the Irish Presbyterian Church, the two last by the society at Boston to which also the other American missionaries in Syria belong. With the two first of these brethren I had some short but pleasant intercourse. The others are at present gone to Blûdân, a village in Anti-Lebanon, a day's journey from Damascus, which for the sake of their health they have chosen as a summer's residence, it being dangerous to stay in the hot

city during the summer months, even notwithstanding its elevation of 2400 feet above the level of the sea. Now, imagine to yourself Damascus with its luxury and sensual enjoyments, with its fanatical Moslem population, with its large mass of men who seem to strive to the utmost after all that belongs to the things of this present life, together with the want of living witnesses for the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and you will readily understand that the labour of four missionaries in so dark a place, costs much effort and needs much prayer, and much praying support, also, from the Lord's people abroad. Here is a city, which, if we include its gardens and suburbs, has a circumference of nearly one day's journey, a city which was once provided with Christian churches, more perhaps than any other in the East. O that the eye of many Christians might be turned towards Damascus, and that our hearts were cured of their indifference as to the everlasting fate of so many thousand poor fellow-sinners!

And with this, my dear friend, I conclude my letter, probably the last that I send you from the East; for the steamer that takes the next mail from Beirût, will, I hope, number me among its passengers. Whatever I may have to communicate in a following letter, will then be forwarded to you by the same opportunity. Farewell. As ever, &c.

AKÛRA, *12th June.*

Since leaving Damascus, my friend, I have not for a single day had an opportunity of writing to you. The distances I had to accomplish were every day so great, that it was quite late before I could have my tent

pitched. Entering the requisite memoranda in my journal was as much as I could accomplish, my fatigue being too great to add the writing of a letter. With my journal before me, I now give you a sketch of the last part of my expedition, as, in consequence of having ended my march to-day at an earlier hour than usual, I have a quiet evening before me.

I took my departure from André's hotel at Damascus on Monday the 9th, early in the morning. Should you ever come into these parts, and should there be no increase in the number of the hotels in Damascus, so as to let you have a choice, I recommend you to keep a good look-out when at André's. More I will not say, you will easily understand me. On leaving the city, I was hardly recovered from the illness into which I had been thrown by the multiplied and sudden refreshments of Damascus. Happily the mountain atmosphere of Anti-Lebanon has re-invigorated me; but I must acknowledge that I daily feel an increasing necessity for bringing my unusually long and exhausting journeys to a close. However, in three or four days more I hope to reach Beirût.

My course took me first from Damascus to Baalbec. This is a journey of two days, and each of these days one has to travel a smart distance. Travellers generally pitch their tents the first night at the village of Zebedani, which lies about half-way. It is a considerable place, close by the source of the Barada river, and surrounded with fruit gardens, as beautiful and lovely as the eye could desire. My tent stood pitched on the north-west side of the village, at the side of the Barada brook. Zebedani lies high, at the end of a grassy

plain of fully three hours' length. More elevated mountain ridges enclose this plain to the right and left, and particularly on the east side, where I saw in many places the snow still lying. The Barada flows through the plain in its full length, and then runs through a rocky defile to a valley on a lower level, where its richly wooded banks present a remarkable contrast with the bare, white limestone rocks which hold these waters embosomed. The Barada, with its villages and orchards, gives to the road from Damascus to Zebedani a charming alternation. Two picturesque bridges, a bold waterfall, and many other interesting points along my path, made me regret my having to hasten so rapidly past. At one of those bridges, the first that one meets in coming from Damascus, I halted, however, for an hour and a half, to take a sketch of the stream which by Naaman was so justly held in high renown.*

One may proceed by one or other of several ways from Zebedani to Baalbec. I had been recommended to take that leading through Sergaya, a large village in one of the valleys of Anti-Lebanon, on account of its picturesque prospects, and I have nowise repented of the choice. Sergaya lies about two hours and a half to the north-north-east of Zebedani, environed with corn fields, meadows, and orchards, and watered by a clear and sparkling mountain stream. To the north of this village the path ascends the heights from the bold and picturesque Wadi-Sergaya, which with many bends

* 2 Kings v. 12. A very interesting article on the *Rivers of Damascus*, by the missionary T. L. Porter, lately appeared in Dr Kitto's *Journal of Sacred Literature*, Nos. 8 and 9, July and October 1853.

and windings descends to the Cœlo-Syrian plain. I did not, however, follow the bed of the wadi, but passed over the hills to the north of it, and thus continued for some time to travel onwards in the western most projecting ranges of Anti-Lebanon. The descent, though interrupted now and then by intervening heights, nevertheless steadily continues. Three or four villages lie on the way. Among these there is one called Bretenni, built on the site of some ancient city or other. Here are seen rocks excavated so as to form houses and dwellings, indicating that the place has been once inhabited, rather below than above the ground. The most ancient inhabitants of the land probably lived in natural caves. A city consisting of caves in the rock, improved and adorned by art, therefore must date from a very remote period of antiquity.

Baalbec's gigantic temple buildings come into view as soon as the traveller has passed the village of Taibeh. The stone-quarries to the right and left now inform us that from here the materials for the temple were taken. There is still one stone that seems not to have been required, and thus has been left at the quarry, though hammer and chisel had already finished their work, so as to make it ready for use. Travellers who have measured this stone tell us that it is sixty-four feet in length. The temple of Baalbec stands half an hour further on.

Works of art such as those of Baalbec, on which whole volumes have been written, and views of which, both by pencil and daguerreotype, have become familiar to us, I am not going to describe. Should we find

still something wanting, in order that we might have a full knowledge of those antiquities, we may rest assured that we shall have our desires speedily gratified; for Baalbec is one of those places which few travellers in the Holy Land leave unvisited. The walls and the columns are covered with the names of visitors. While I was encamped here on the eastern side of the temple wall, there came two English travellers,—one provided with a large daguerreotype, and the other gifted with eminent talents for painting,—for the purpose of committing to paper, with all copiousness and accuracy, these magnificent and impressive ruins. I doubt not but we may, from their united labours, look for something worthy of the subject. In order to give you a general idea of the ruins, I have added two views of Baalbec to the other contents of my sketch-book,—views which represent the temple buildings and village as seen from a short distance. I wandered among and about the ruins during the whole afternoon. There was not a spot that I did not visit; not a spot, too, that did not fill me with amazement! Well may one ask, Was it by human hands that these enormous buildings were erected? Was it by human hands that those gigantic stones have been raised up and placed on the capitals of these lofty pillars? Was it by human hands that all this minute sculpture was wrought? What workman could have been capable of executing such a combination of grandeur and elegance? Yet it is not only the vastness and magnificence of the temple buildings that confound the traveller. He is seized with amazement and with awe as he considers how

those ponderous stones and prodigious columns could have been thrown down,—the work of many long years, the fruit of the sweat and blood of thousands, when the Lord lifted up his hand, was thrown to the ground. Who does not shudder at the very thought of the earthquake that overthrew the idol's temple of Baalbec? Who is there that, while standing among these heaps of ruins, does not tremble at the recollection of those words, "The Lord will destroy (tear down) the house of the proud"? * Tear down? Yes, tear down!

From Baalbec, with its ruins, Leontes-fountains and orchards, I travelled on the following day to Hermel, a journey which kept me fully twelve hours in the saddle. That day's tour gave me a clear idea of the B'kaâ, at the northern end of which the village of Hermel is situated. The B'kaâ, or, as the Scriptures call it, "the valley of Lebanon," I had now visited at various points. At its southern extremity,—where it contracts into a narrow gorge formed by the Lebanon slopes and a lower mountain ridge which runs between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, nearly parallel with the valley of the Leontes,—the same gorge that we became acquainted with at Hâsbeiya, where it is called Wadi-et-Teim; at Kamid-el-Lauz, where the B'kaâ widens considerably, and where the Wadi-et-Teim with its northern prolongation terminates; at Baalbec, the centre of the Cœlo-Syrian valley; and, last of all, at Hermel, where the valley expands into an extensive plain, while Anti-Lebanon bends round to the east and Lebanon to the west. It is here, in this plain, we see the Orontes making its

* Proverbs xv. 25.

way; whilst several places that are famous in sacred and profane history, such as Riblah, Emessa (Homs), Hamath, &c., are situated in its bosom. A valley of such length, and of such elevation as that of the B'kaâ, is in a physical point of view well worthy of notice. It seems to have its highest point not far to the north of Baalbec. There at least is the water shed; the springs run, some of them southwards into the tributary brooks of the Leontes, and others northwards, gradually converging into a pretty broad stream which joins the sources of the Orontes not far from Hermel. At Baalbec the elevation above the level of the sea is, according to Russegger, 3196 Parisian feet. Were I more at home in geology, I should not confine myself to telling you the bare and simple fact that the B'kaâ, throughout its entire length, exhibits an unbroken chain of volcanic formations, this being revealed chiefly in a quantity of trap or black porous lava; but I should, in that case, have been able to add some information as to how and when the workings of the subterranean fire rent Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon asunder. We must now leave it to the consideration of the scientific. I must not linger either on the fertility or sterility of different parts of the B'kaâ. This only I will remark in passing, that the cultivation of the cereals succeeds less here, upon the whole, than in other districts. Occasionally you find beautiful corn-fields; but speaking generally the stalks stand thin and weak. On the other hand, the soil in some parts of the B'kaâ is pre-eminently adapted to the cultivation of the vine. Other parts of the valley, again, are so hard and gravelly that nothing will grow on them. The soil in those places is

of a ferruginous quality, and has the same dry and desert appearance so common in the vast plains of South Africa. In the neighbourhood of Baalbec, and again, too, in the northern parts of the valley, those hard desert grounds are chiefly met with.

From these few words on the Cœlo-Syrian plain, you will readily perceive that the journey from Baalbec to Hermel takes you along a road that is anything but variegated and pleasant. A look at sunrise at Anti-Lebanon, when veiled in dark shadow, and at snow-capped Lebanon when gloriously irradiated with the beams of the sun, is grand and sublime; but from early morning to late in the evening to have nothing before you but the self-same hills, the self-same interminable plains, the self-same kind of dry soil, to meet hardly any one, and to see only a few small villages in the distance,—how can such a journey be called anything but wearisome? Still I may not complain of this way. I travelled along it in the cheerful enjoyment of perfect freedom, free in this world and made free for eternity through the sacrificial blood of the Son of God; sighing Israel, on the contrary, bound in the chains of Nebuchadnezzar, and bound, too, in the chains of their sins, journeyed along this road; some, as for instance the sons of Zedekiah and the chiefs among the people, to hear sentence of death pronounced on them at Riblah,* Zedekiah himself first to see the blood of his sons made to flow and then to have his eyes put out, and the remainder of the people to end their days in slavery in a land where the Lord was not known and was not feared.†

* 2 Kings xxiii. 33. † 2 Kings xxv. 6, 7, 18–21.

I might tell you much more from my journal about the road from Baalbec to Hermel, did not time fail me. Hereafter I hope to have an opportunity of giving you the information which I must now omit. Be it enough that I say for the present we reached the Orontes at eight o'clock in the evening, and had to pitch the tent in a fig-tree garden on the banks of the stream, without being able to reach the village of Hermel. It lay a half hour further on the other or the west side of the stream, and the foaming waters, whose depth we could not sound in the dark, kept us on the side where we were. Of course there was no food to be had either for man or beast; we found enough in the canteen for ourselves, but our horses and mules had, to the great annoyance of the mukhari and to no less regret on my part, to remain without food until the following morning. A short way higher up, as I afterwards learnt, is a bridge by which people pass to Hermel, but our mukhari knew nothing about it; he had never been at Hermel. At the spot where we had encamped, we next morning saw some people wade through the river; our own train followed their example, and we remained until the afternoon under the umbrageous walnut-trees of the village.

Meanwhile I engaged an old man, the owner of a mill close to the spot where we had spent the night, to be my guide. With him I visited the strange sort of monument mentioned by Mr Thomson in his narrative of a journey from Beirût to Aleppo,* under the name of Kamoa-Hermel. It stands at the distance of about an hour and a half to the east of the village, on a ris-

* See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Nov. 1848, p. 695, &c.

ing ground in the middle of the B'kaâ, and commands an extensive view over the country both to the north and to the south. I had seen this monument the day before when we were yet at five hours' distance from Hermel. Had I not known it to be the Kamoa-Hermel, I would from afar have taken it for a tower. And, in fact, it has much resemblance in form to that. Two quadrilateral masses rise, the one above the other, and are covered with a kind of pyramid, while the whole stands on a low pedestal of three steps, and rises to a height of about eighty feet. The undermost of the two cubic-shaped parts is thirty feet square. How this monument is adorned with pilasters and an entablature; how on the lower cube, stags and other game, and all sorts of hunting implements, are sculptured in relief; how the huge mass has been built of large hewn stones, but now is fallen down on one side,—all this you will be able to see from the sketches I have taken of the Kamoa-Hermel. The grand question now is, By what architect, and for what purpose, was this singular-looking monument built? Mr Thomson suggests the question* whether Nebuchadnezzar might not have erected it as a memorial of his conquests? or whether it might not have been built by the Seleucidæ, who are well known to have been famous sportsmen? This inquiry I leave to the learned. My own task—that of examining the building, determining its geographical position, and faithfully sketching it—I have accomplished.

The few short hours I devoted to a visit of Kamoa-Hermel were highly valuable to me. I got here a

* See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, May 1847, p. 405.

clear idea of that much-contested Scriptural expression, "the entrance of Hamath" (Numbers xxxiv. 8), the "entering into Hamath" (Josh. xiii. 5), "the entering in of Hamath" (Judg. iii. 3; 1 Kings viii. 65), "entering of Hamath" (2 Kings xiv. 25), "entering in of Hamath" (2 Chron. vii. 8), &c. Hamath itself lies, it is true, at a considerable distance further to the north, but the entire northern plain seen from the monument of Hermel was called after Hamath, the capital, "the land of Hamath."* Into this land the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges form "an entrance" in the strictest sense of the word. At the Kamoa-Hermel, in fact, a new district is entered; and that point is the natural gate of the high plateau of Cœlo-Syria with its huge mountain walls. It is there that the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges may be said to begin. He who enters here, travels onwards between their snow-capt summits until he reaches the sources of the Jordan and the frontier city of Dan. The land was allotted to Israel unto "the entrance of Hamath." It was for a short time only, however, that they maintained themselves in the possession of such an extensive territory; we see Israel's frontier extended thus far to the north, once under the dominion of King Solomon, and again under that of Jeroboam, the son of Jehoash, King of Israel. Yet once more shall it come to pass, according to the word of Ezekiel,† that Israel's frontier on the north shall be the "entrance of Hamath"‡ (Engl. version, "border of

* 2 Kings xxiii. 23–33. The variety of these translations shews how much the expression had puzzled the translators.

† Ezek. xlvii. 16, 17, 20. ‡ Dutch version.

Hamath"); and when I put together the various passages of Scripture in which this northern boundary is mentioned, I conclude that an imaginary line from Mount Cassius on the coast along the northern base of Lebanon, to the entering into the B'kaâ at the Kamoa-Hermel, must be regarded as the "frontier" that is meant.

At an hour's distance to the south of the Kamoa-Hermel is the place where the Orontes bursts forth from its copious sources. Before this, however,—that is to say, much farther to the south,—the waters of the Orontes begin to form a stream. This stream is not derived from the main springs, but from the gradual confluence of a number of different rills into a considerable brook, which, under the name of Nahr-Fiki, flows in a deep ravine past the chief fountain of the river. Here the rocky sides of the ravine are fearfully steep; some places seem quite inaccessible. I had to follow a dangerous path, better fitted for mountain goats than for men, in order to get to the foot of the rocks. On reaching the bottom, you perceive, on the east side of the ravine, a hole overshadowed by thick sycamores; high brushwood seems to make it vain to attempt approaching the spot; but an eye accustomed to such jungles soon detects a winding path, and perceives, also, that the dark-green wild fig-trees, and the festoons of vines that wind between them, are the productions of a nature to which the hand of man has remained a stranger. In this lovely spot there is a deep basin of water, which lies still and motionless, of a clear dark-blue colour, and overflowing on all sides, owing to the abundant ingress of the water that rises from the subterranean

springs. This seems to me to be the principal source of the river. But if one passes to the other side of the Fiki brook by a little bridge formed of stones and branches put together, and then cautiously ascends the cliffs, he will perceive that from under the rocks, to the north of that principal source of the river, the water bursts forth with great force, and this not at one point only, but at different places, all close beside each other. Boiling and foaming do the waters gush up and unite themselves with the Fiki stream. No wonder that hardly half a mile farther on, we find the Orontes already augmented into a broad and swift rolling river; no wonder, too, that throughout its further course it maintains the character of a considerable stream.*

There is an additional circumstance that gives an interest to these springs. Here it was that the founder of the Maronites lived, Mar (that is Saint) Maroun. Above the fountains, among the almost inaccessible rocks, he established for himself a monastic residence in a grotto, and there, as it is said, ended his days. This grotto, called Deir-Mar Maroun, is now unoccupied and forsaken, the cells and chambers are destroyed, and it serves only as a shelter for the sheep and goats of roving herdsmen.

Pressed by the far too quickly fleeting time, I rode from the west side of the springs of the Orontes to Hermel, a distance which it takes about an hour and a quarter to ride. There I found my little band beneath

* I cannot, therefore, agree with Volney's statement, where he says: —"*Si l'Oronte n'était arrêté par des barres multipliées, il resterait à sec pendant l'été* (Were not the Orontes stopped by manifold barriers, it would remain dry during summer).—C. F. Volney, *Voyage en Syrie*, etc., 1783–85. Paris VII. Tom. I. p. 308.

the shadow of the foliage, refreshed by the cool atmosphere of the spot, and by the perfume of numberless wild shrubs and flowers. They had failed, however, in getting what was principally wanted; the people of the village would not sell them any food, for what reason I could not comprehend. I believe that Hermel—lovely as its situation is, on the sides of a horse-shoe shaped valley, amply as it is supplied with water, no fewer than twelve fountains sending forth their streams, and beautifully green as are the walnut, pomegranate, willow, and poplar trees which surround the village,—is, nevertheless, a poor and miserable place. The half of its houses have fallen into rubbish. It is also considered very unhealthy, and Mr Thomson even mentions that during the year immediately preceding his visit (1846) a fourth part of its inhabitants died from dysentery. Almost depopulated and grown wild, Hermel is falling into deeper and deeper decay. It bears traces, notwithstanding, of having been at one time a place of considerable importance.

A good word always finds a good place; this I found verified at Hermel. An old Matawileh, whose pipe I had filled with the last fragments of tobacco that I had left, was thereby induced to sell us eggs and one or two chickens. We had some bread and rice still remaining in the canteen, and could now proceed on our journey without risk of our suffering from hunger in the higher tracts of Lebanon.

Once more, then, we ascended the mountains. On this occasion I had no guide; but the mukhari had got so many directions at Hermel, that he thought he could not possibly go wrong. The man has done his

best, too, although not without grumbling many a time at the difficulties and fatigues of the mountain track we had to follow. But grumbling is the habit of all mukharis under all circumstances. Enough: we reached the far-famed cedars of Lebanon in the afternoon of the second day, slept that same evening at Bsherreh, and have now got as far as 'Akûrah, where we intend to pass the Sunday. On Monday morning I hope to set forward on the road to Beirût through Afka, and, if all goes well, to reach that city on Tuesday. It was on the recommendation of my friend Mr Thomson that I undertook this journey over the higher parts of Lebanon. He has himself travelled along the same road, on a journey from Beirût to Aleppo and back again, and has given such a captivating account of that trip in some numbers of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* already referred to, that I felt strongly inclined, in spite of the steepness of the ascents and descents one meets by this way, to proceed to Beirût through Bsherreh, 'Akûrah, and Afka. Excuse me, then, my friend, for referring you to the narrative of Mr Thomson for all the particulars of this mountain track, while I must now content myself with slightly touching on the principal points in a few sketchy strokes of my pen.

Much already have I said to you about Lebanon and its glories. Yet between Hermel and the Cedars I saw still more of nature's beauties, and these, too, of quite a different kind from what I had seen in the more southern mountain ranges at Jebea or Jezzîn. From Hermel our path began immediately to rise, and brought us ere long into a high-situated valley, which had been transformed into a magnificent park by the hand of

nature alone, without any assistance from the hands of man. I was ravished with the picturesque groups of oaks, the fantastically-shaped terebinths, the oddly-twisted stems and branches of other trees, in which were blended together all sorts of green, pale, dark, yellowish, or sometimes more inclining to brown. At other points, again, the road led over rocky plateaux, grown over with short prickly shrubs. Alternating with these there appeared at other places cypress groves, where each several tree was in itself a study for the landscape painter,—some on account of their enormous stems and branches; others on account of their trunks having been broken by storms or being half-decayed with age; and others, too, on account of the bright verdure of the shoots here and there springing up from a piece of root apparently dead, and partially torn out of the ground. Would you see trees in all their splendour and beauty, then enter these wild groves that have never been touched by the pruning knife of art, where neither branches nor stems are ever bent into rectilinear forms, and where the dead wood is never removed from amid the living. Come up into Mount Lebanon, and then tell me if you ever had an idea of such natural cypress groves as are exhibited by the elevated valleys of this mountain range.

The distance from Hermel to the Cedars being much too great to be traversed in a single day, we passed the night in a valley, 5600 feet above the sea, and called Merj-Ahîn, after a small village of the same name; my tent stood here pitched at the side of a clear running brook. The Merj-Ahîn is a grassy and well-watered plain among the hills, where during summer

many herdsmen come and encamp with their flocks. Another such plain called Merj-el-Achmar, lies to the south-west of this, and has likewise much grass and water. We traversed Merj-el-Achmar in its entire length, and then went through a valley which surrounds the highest summit of Lebanon. In this valley the snow was still lying, and the top called Jebel Muskieh, which attains a height of fully 10,000 feet, still lay wholly hid beneath its glistening winter clothing. The snow-water here collects in several small streams which finally rush down a deep ravine to the B'kaâ. From this lofty snow-clad tract one comes to the eastern slope which is turned towards the B'kaâ, and now an exquisitely beautiful panorama opens out before the traveller as he follows his path to the Cedars. To convince you of this I need only mention the Cœlo-Syrian plain, with Hermon and Anti-Lebanon, and more immediately in the foreground the cypress-covered ridges and ravines of the Jebel-Makmel, one of the branches of Lebanon. Snow-capt Senîn, also, another summit of the Lebanon range, rising more to the south, here comes into view, and the charms of the landscape are finally enhanced by the mirror-like waters of the small lake Lemone or Yemone, at the base of Jebel-Makmel. A few hours' more ascent along a narrow and dangerous track, among rocks still partially buried under the snow, while one must be careful where he plants his feet if he would avoid falling headlong into the fearful depth beneath, and we have reached the highest point of this stage in our journey. Another track here winds up out of the deep glen, from 'Ain-ata, being that which travellers usually take who come by the shortest

way from Baalbec to the Cedars. The two paths unite on the crest of the hill, which is about 8000 feet high. A few paces more and we bid farewell to Cœlo-Syria and Hermon, and all else lying to the east of Lebanon. We now turn our eyes to the western side of the narrow ridge, where a prospect quite unique in its kind awaits us.

Of such prospects from lofty mountain heights, you can form no idea but from seeing them yourself. It were in vain for me to attempt giving you a sketch of the view that from this point of the main ridge of Lebanon one commands of the mountains of lower altitude, lying in the depths beneath, with their valleys, woods, villages and streams, as well as over the still lower plains adjacent to the sea, and in fine of the boundless sea itself. Let me leave it, therefore, to the force of your own imagination, seeing that I can assist it with nothing beyond a few hints with respect to the colour and apparent dimensions of the objects in yonder amphitheatre of mountains. As respects colour, all that is seen from this fearful elevation, looks blue. Nothing but the rocks in the immediate foreground is seen in its natural colour; all objects beyond, owing to their remoteness, appear of a blue tint, which is paler and paler in proportion as the eye approaches the upper horizon, and darker and darker, on the contrary, in proportion as it tries to penetrate the shadows of the deep sunken glens and ravines within a nearer compass. And of the apparent magnitude of the objects you may form a comparative idea, when I tell you of the far-famed Cedar park, as it appears from this lofty spot. You know, from the narratives of different travellers, that the old

cedars, now only twelve in number, stand in a broad cleft of Lebanon at 6300 feet above the sea. You know that those venerable trees—perhaps the oldest in the world, and which some think must have sprung up soon after the flood—are giants above all other trees growing, and that this dozen is surrounded by an after-growth of 400 younger cedars, more or less. Such a park consequently comprizes a considerable plot of ground, and the height of the cedars is in proportion to the ground they cover. Nevertheless, the Cedar Park, seen from the summit-ridge where you cross Mount Lebanon from east to west, above the deep valley of Bsherreh, appears like a green spot of the size of a man's hand, a grove of such tiny dimensions that one might suppose it to be a solitary bush of oak.

The descent from this to the Cedars occupies nearly an hour and a half. After that one passes from the scorching rays of the sun under their splendid leafy arcades, where you find yourself transplanted at once into one of the most charming regions that this globe can shew. A cool atmosphere, perfumed with the balsamic smell of the cedar-wood, and the charm of the birds among the branches,—you may imagine how the over-heated and wearied traveller feels at the change. Had not the praise of those cedars been so often sung by others, I would try to tell you something of the glory of God in His works,—the cedars which "He hath planted."* But you know the cedars, and have perhaps often ere now felt a desire to come and encamp here for a part of the summer. If you ever happen to realise that wish, then I beg that I may be of the party.

* Ps. civ. 16.

Six weeks under the cedars of Lebanon! it is worth one's while to set about such a journey.

It is now some years since a Maronite has built a habitation for himself in this lovely spot, and here spends his days in idle piety. I cannot strictly call him a hermit, for during winter, when the cedars lie buried under twenty feet of snow, he returns to his old residence in the village of Bsherreh, so that the cedars properly serve him only as summer quarters, rather than as an asylum from the din and bustle of the world. Neither does he spend a single day quite alone; many travellers, both native and foreign, pass this way. But we will not grudge him the fragrance and the shade of the cedars, and less so as he never fails to have something in store in his oratory for the refreshment of travellers, such as honey, bread, wine, and even *liqueurs;* and these he offers with great hospitality. If you are unwilling to lie under any obligation to the pious man, you have only to disburthen yourself of any feeling of the kind by giving him a few piastres as baksheesh. He will afterwards present an album to you in which you may inscribe your name, should you prefer that to increasing the number of the many initials carved in the bark of the trees by the addition of your own.

Does he know anything with respect to the antiquity of these trees? thought I. I put the question to him, but his reply was far from satisfactory. "The twelve old cedars," said he, "were planted by the Apostles." The poor Maronite was not in the least aware that Furer found twenty-five old cedars still remaining here in 1565, as Lord Lindsay tells us, and Maundrell six-

teen in 1696, so that the dozen now remaining is certainly far below the original number.

On that day I chose for my night-quarters Bsherreh, which lies 1500 feet lower than the cedars, and on the edge of a deep ravine. It is a poor Maronite village, but surrounded, nevertheless, with the boldest and most magnificent natural scenery. Waterfalls rush on all sides down the perpendicular walls of rock, and woods and gardens cover the pre-eminently fertile soil. What a charming place this would be, did not its poor population lie oppressed in the chains of the priestly slavery of the Maronites! Truly I know not which to wonder at most, the very great fertility of these mountain sides—a fertility constantly nourished by the snow waters that descend from the lofty summits of Lebanon—or the profound wretchedness of their inhabitants, whose superabundance of material bliss is of no use to them, and brings them no prosperity. How delighted many would be to choose a summer residence in these regions! How useful the healthy and invigorating air of Mount Lebanon might be to such of our invalids as are in a condition to undertake a journey thither! But the state in which these villages are at present, the annoyance that people would be subjected to from their inhabitants, and the total want of comforts and conveniences such as convalescents require, make Lebanon as yet quite unfit for that purpose. May our eyes yet behold better days, days of emancipation, of deliverance, and of restoration; days in which the Lord will turn again the captivity of His people; then first shall we learn rightly to appreciate the blessings which are treasured up in Lebanon—in its fertility, its

productions, its running streams, and its exquisite climate!

Bsherreh, with its magnificent natural scenery, with its delightful climate, with its handsome men and pretty women, with its convents, and its conventual influences, gave me much to think upon. What might Bsherreh be were the light of the Gospel there to make life arise out of the dead? And what is Bsherreh now, situated as it is with all the blessings of Lebanon in its bosom? What it is!—A village of beggars, a wretched place, where—as in the case of so many other Lebanon villages which are inhabited by Maronites—mendicity is practised as a regular means of subsistence, and this, too, under the blasphemous pretext that in this respect the example of the Lord Jesus Christ is followed.

Let this suffice for a characteristic trait of the religion of the Maronites. 'Akûrah is no better. Dispeace, contention, poverty, and wretchedness, I see all around me. I can hardly get food to buy. It was by a great favour that I succeeded in purchasing some bread made of maize-meal; the villagers have scarcely bread to eat, and this, too, while the richest soil and the most copious streams of water might be made to produce all that man can expect from the ground. Moreover, 'Akûrah is at this moment burdened with having twenty soldiers quartered upon the place, these having been sent by the Pasha of Beirût in order to find out the person guilty of a murder that had been perpetrated here a short time before. The murderer has not yet been discovered. The pressure endured by the villagers from the quartering of soldiers upon them

is applied as a stimulus to their finding out the guilty person, and delivering him into the Pasha's hands.

I have not much to say about the road from Bsherreh to 'Akûrah. Not that this mountain track is at all wanting in fine views, or in geological and geographical interest; but that, seeing I must reserve these matters for another opportunity, I may not weary you at present. In travelling this road I passed many a high situated snow-field, many a severe ascent from which I saw Tripoli and other places lying along the coast; I came down many a valley where I found, among the otherwise bare gray rocks, green grassy pastures and cool running brooks, the resort of roving herdsmen and their flocks. Finally, after many a going up and coming down, my tent is pitched under a splendid walnut-tree, outside the village 'Akûrah. Here I am 4500 feet above the sea, and much higher still are the rocks that tower over my head. The Nahr-Ibrahim, or Adonis-River, here has one of its two sources. The other rushes up in a remarkable grotto at Afka, at a distance of two hours from this. That I hope to visit on Monday, and to tell you something about it afterwards from Beirût.

BEIRÛT, 18*th June*.

The Lord be praised, my travels are now come to a close.

From 'Akûrah to Beirût I had an interesting stage for the last of my journey. Starting early I breakfasted at the fountain of the Nahr-Ibrahim at Afka. The water of that river rushes out of a cavern in the lofty rock, without your being able to discover whence it

originally comes. It does not appear to be exactly what is called a spring; it seems more likely that the snow water of the higher rocks finds somewhere a hidden canal by which it passes into this grotto. The cavern's rocky walls, the waterfalls, and the deep ravine into which the latter precipitate themselves, make Afka a place of singular and striking beauty. In days of old there stood at Afka a temple consecrated to Venus, where, year after year, the most beautiful maidens of Syria and Phœnicia were sacrificed. The water of the river was in these times not seldom reddened with human blood. Happily these atrocities have come to an end, the temple lies in ruins, and all that remains now of bloody Afka is the stones of the overthrown walls. A Matawileh hamlet has taken the place of the idol's seat.

From Afka an extremely fatiguing path leads to the higher ridges and the upper valleys of Jebel-Senîn, one of the loftiest summits of Lebanon, at least 8500 feet above the level of the sea. The Senîn is still capped with snow, to the no small refreshment of the inhabitants of Beirût, as from it they are daily supplied with snow wherewith to cool their drinks. Two remarkable fountains occur on the upper road from Afka to Beirût,—the Nahr-Assal (Honey-River) and the Nahr-Lebban (the Sour Milk-River). Both of these streams send down their foaming waters from the high snow fields along the rocks into a frightfully deep ravine, through which they rush impetuously from waterfall to waterfall, and after tossing and roaring some time, they enter the sea under the name of Nahr-Kelb, or Dog's-River, two hours to the north of Beirût. The

path crossing both these streams leads along a natural bridge, forming an arch of not less than 163 feet in span, and from 70 to 80 feet above the stream. In the middle this arched rock is 30 feet thick. *

At an hour's distance past this bridge of rock, I held my noonday halt under the shade of a willow tree at the ruins of Fokkrah. Here there was once a town, and beside the town a temple, the ruins of which exhibit the Grecian order of architecture. Mr Thomson found here a stone with a Greek inscription; the latter he has given in the narrative of his travels above referred to.

From Fokkrah one comes to Musraâh and Kleat. The path now goes down the rocks into the glen of the Nahr-Kelb. One's hair almost stands on end at the sight of this fearful chasm. Down you go nevertheless; you admire the sycamores and oaks that border the furious torrent; then you climb up the other side, and ere long reach the village Feitrûn, and half an hour farther the picturesquely situated Ajeltûn.

Ajeltûn was the last place I pitched my tent at. I had several visitors in the course of the evening, and among these a young man, who addressed me in French, with an accent that would have led any one to suppose he had enjoyed his educational advantages in Paris rather than in this district of Mount Lebanon. He had been for some years at the Jesuit seminary in the neighbouring village of Antûra, and there had acquired this fluency in speaking French. The readiness with which we could understand one another,

* See *Bibliot. Sacra*, Feb. 1848—Thomson's Tour from Beirût to Aleppo.

gave me an opportunity of putting many questions and learning a great deal respecting his country, his village, and his fellow-Lebanon inhabitants. Forgive me, my dear friend, for relating no part of that evening's conversation. Only think how many things my head is filled with, in the prospect of my leaving this part of the world in four days, and I feel assured that you will not be surprised at receiving at this moment such brief notices of my last adventures.* I thought that I should have a few quiet days at Beirût, when I might tell you a great deal more about Lebanon; but with all my endeavours to make the most of my time, I find that it far from suffices for enabling me to overtake all that I had wished to accomplish. It would seem as if this were one of the inevitable disappointments to which every traveller is subject.

I reached Beirût on the 15th, safe and sound. In the course of my ride from Ajeltûn to the mouth of the Nahr-Kelb I was many a time called to admire the beauties and natural riches of Mount Lebanon. I would not have passed by as ordinary matters the Egyptian, Persian, and Roman inscriptions on the rocks near the bridge, at the mouth of the Dog's-River, had they not been copied by other travellers. One more river must be crossed between the Nahr-Kelb and the city, namely, the Nahr-Beirût (the Magoras of Strabo and Pliny), the passage of which is effected by a well kept bridge, along which one ap-

* We are happy to find that the brevity of our communications on Mount Lebanon is amply compensated for by the lately published work of Colonel Churchill, entitled, *Mount Lebanon, or Ten Years' Residence from* 1842 *till* 1852, *describing the Manners, Customs, &c.; and Historical Records, &c.* London. 1853.

proaches the suburban gardens and houses of Beirût. One half-hour more among cactus hedges and small native houses, among men, camels, horses, and asses, —a half-hour of sand and dust,—and once more I find myself in the same room of the hotel which, some months ago, I first entered after coming ashore.

You may well suppose that my heart was filled with the liveliest thankfulness for my safe return from *such a journey*. Thankful, indeed, do I feel to my God who hath conducted me safely through so many difficulties and dangers, and has ever been at my right hand as my Helper and Deliverer. Thankful, too, do I feel towards my friends who have shewn me so much love in days of need and perplexity. It has been with a premeditated purpose that I have come here a few days before the departure of the steamboat, that I might have some time to pay a farewell visit to friends at Shemlân, Abeyh, and Sidon. All the business I had to attend to previous to my departure has been despatched. My place, too, has been taken on board the Austrian steamer. Nothing remains for me to do but once more to mount my horse to-morrow morning, and ride by the way of Shemlân and Abeyh to Sidon, from which I hope to return the day previous to the steamer's setting off.

ON BOARD THE STEAMER "AUSTRIA,"
LARNAKA ROADS, 23*d June*.

Much of God's preserving care have I experienced during my sojourn in the Holy Land, and many a deliverance; yet I consider it the crowning mercy of all that have fallen to my lot, that I can now sit down to

write a few lines to you. Already had I pressed for the last time the hands of my warm-hearted friends, the Scotts, at Shemlân, and of the not less warm-hearted missionaries, Mr Calhoun, and Dr De Forest; already had I descended the slope of Mount Lebanon, and advanced as far as the Nahr-Damûr; when, all at once, my limbs were seized with shivering, and with a painful and oppressive feeling. A heavy fever seized and overpowered me. What was I to do? To return to Beirût? To ride on to Sidon? Both were alike difficult, and a place to seek shelter in by the way was nowhere to be found. The sun was burning hot, and the heat was increased by a sultry south wind which blew right in my face. I rode slowly on and arrived at good Mr Thomson's with my head as if on fire. I can hardly describe to you how cordially he received me. But, alas! my coming gave him little joy. I had speedily to go to bed, while from hour to hour the fever assumed a more serious aspect.

There, then, I lay, sick and faint, in no small danger of now experiencing the worst of the re-action from so many months of uninterrupted travelling. I had dreaded the moment at which I should pass suddenly from continuous effort to repose. That moment had now arrived. I had heard much of the deadly Syrian fever, and looking at the cases of Messrs Dale, Molyneux, and so many others who had fallen the victims of too great exertion in travelling through this country, I had reason to fear that the worst was at hand with me too. There was no physician at Sidon. Dr Van Dyck had just left it. My papers, drawings, and other results of my travels, lay in the hotel at Beirût.

They might perhaps all be lost, should God see good to take me away, and then would all the trouble and labour, all the dangers and exertions I had gone through, in the end bear no fruit of any kind. Was such a conclusion in accordance with the government of a God whose name is LOVE?—Should such be the result, the blame must rest with me, and not with God; then it seemed clear that all my hope in Him, and all my trust in the atoning virtue of the propitiatory blood of His only-begotten Son, was nothing but fearful self-deception, and my end, therefore, might well be in accordance with such self-deception. These and similar horrible thoughts agonised my soul, and made the fever worse and worse. My head had no rest; it was as if a fire were raging in my veins. All that Christian friendship and kindness could do, was done for me by the Thomsons. But even the most intense affection, however alleviating sickness and suffering, cannot arrest the arm of death. In addition to my personal sufferings, I felt grieved at the thought of the trouble and distress I was bringing on those kind friends.

In those alarming moments, however, the Lord shewed himself to be truly "my Shepherd," as the text of that day brought to my mind. He delivered me from the struggles of doubt and unbelief, so that I could be at rest, and, whatever the issue of my sickness might be, looking at Christ I might say, "I will not fear"—"I shall not want."*

On the second day the fever was still heavy on me, and I felt myself getting weaker. Mr Thomson repre-

* Ps. xxiii.

sented to me the desirableness of my getting on board the steamer if possible. "If once upon the sea," he said, "I hope you will be preserved. Instantly to leave the land and proceed out to sea, is the surest remedy for the dangerous Syrian fever. We shall probably be able to hire an Arab boat, and will try to take you into it to-night. You may be early to-morrow morning at Beirût, and that in time, too, for the steamer before it leaves."

I collected all my remaining strength and energies, and in the evening was conveyed, not without difficulty, but still successfully, to the Arab boat. A member of the family accompanied me and attended to me, and without any aggravation of my symptoms I reached Beirût before the heat of the day had begun. Dr De Forest had just come into the town, and gave me some medicines. On the afternoon of the day following, I went on board the *Austria*. The fever had not yet abated; but with every quarter of an hour that we proceeded from the coast I felt myself better. With a tear of sorrow at my departure from that much wished-for land, I saw Mount Lebanon grow faint, and finally disappear. But with a tear of gratitude, I felt at the same time the fever decrease, and finally quit me. I am quite free from it to-day, and nothing is left but a feeling of complete exhaustion—the consequence of my illness.

On the Rhine, close to Arnheim,
25th July 1852.

I travelled for a whole month without writing you a single line. What use, thought I, is there in sending a letter? I shall myself follow close at its heels. Thus it was that I let you hear nothing from me when at Smyrna, Trieste, Venice, Milan, Como, Chiavenna, Choir, Zurich, or Basle. Everything pleasant and important that I have seen or met with I hope to tell you to-morrow morning, when we again see each other face to face. Switzerland, which I had not seen before, struck me most. What a glorious country! What mountains, what valleys! Yet I must say that, on comparing Lebanon with Switzerland, even now when "the land mourneth and languisheth;" when "Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down,"* God's word is true: the land of Israel, "the land that the Lord espied for Jacob," is "*the glory of all lands.*"† Oh that our hearts were truly quickened to turn to that God with prayers and supplications for Israel's salvation; to "the God that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage! He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again. He will have compassion upon His people; He will subdue their iniquities; and He will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."‡

* Isa. xxxiii. 9. † Ezek. xx. 6, 15. ‡ Mic. vii. 18–20.

Even before my again setting foot on my native land, I have met with one who is both a friend and fellow-countryman. He stept on board our steam-boat last evening at Cologne. I told him some of my adventures in the Holy Land. The worthy man was much struck. Hardly had the dawn of the morning broken upon us when he came to me with the Bible in his hand.

"Let this be your Psalm to-day," said he, as he pointed to the verses of praise in Psalm cxviii., "and with a cheerful, thankful heart, greet once more the land of your birth." Yes, thought I, that is indeed a fitting strain for a traveller who, after many storms and many dangers, safely reaches his home. May it be the song of praise of all of us as we reach our heavenly home! May we all be travelling thither! And may we learn, even while here below, to raise that song of gratitude which we hope once to sing in perfect harmony with all the heavenly host above:—

"O praise the Lord, for he is good;
His mercy lasteth ever;
Let those of Israel now say,
His mercy faileth never. . . . .
Thou art my God, I'll thee exalt,
My God, I'll praise thee ever;
Give thanks to God for he is good;
His mercy faileth never!"

Farewell until to-morrow.

Your affectionate friend,

. . . . . .

APPENDIX.

THE following letter was received while the last sheets of this work were in the Press. The information it contains seemed of too great interest for our readers, not to bring it under their notice:—

ABEYH, *March 7th*, 1854.

DEAR SIR,—Your favour, with the enclosed second halves of bills, was received after some delay, owing to unusually irregular mails. Our friends in Holland and yourself again deserve our thanks for their and your continued sympathy and assistance in the work of the Lord here. The society of Kaiserswerth who sent the deaconesses to Jerusalem are about to send three to Beirût also, to open a Protestant hospital for the advantage of strangers and Syrians. The Protestants of various nations residing at Beirût have met repeatedly to consult upon this matter, and are now subscribing the necessary funds. It needs about £200 per annum, or a little less. It is pleasant to see this evidence of Protestant catholicity and harmony, in the union of Prussians, Swiss, French, English, Scotch, Americans, joined in a work of love in this distant land. If the thing succeeds, it is contemplated to send more of the sisters to open a school for Franks and natives. There is much need of such a school. We have many applications from Italians, Maltese, Greeks, &c., as well as Syrians, to take their children, whom we have to turn away from our doors. The war occupies the thoughts of the people very much. Many are volunteering from the Mohammedan sects, and even of the nominal Christians some are going to the wars. The people of Nablous are in a state of confusion, having taken the opportunity to settle some old quarrels of their own, or rather to

carry them on. Two rival Moslem houses claim the supremacy in that region, and are plundering and burning and killing each other's dwellings and families. The rest of the land is quiet.

Of course this prevalence of the war spirit and war news interferes with our work. Still our schools thrive, our congregations are as full as ever, and we trust without apprehension in the ordinary circuit of our labours, except about the head waters of the Jordan and from that region to Nazareth. Of course our Jerusalem brethren cannot visit Nablous and Nazareth as freely as before.

Mr Thomson has full Bible classes and zealous ones at Sidon, and the native friends there seem very zealous as propagandists. Some villagers above Sidon, especially Jûn, near which Lady Stanhope resided and died, have Protestant communities, and the knowledge of the gospel seems to be extending there. Jûn is the place where the Latins first gained a considerable company of the Greek Church, forming the first portion of that body now known as the Papal Greek Church. There is an interesting movement at Tyre. Several are declared evangelicals, and they are urging us to give them a good schoolmaster, who also can instruct adults in the way of truth. I hope we shall be able to do so soon. Sidon was the mother of Tyre, and now the new-born Protestants of Sidon are teaching their relatives of Tyre the truth as it is in Jesus. I came to Abeyh to see little Emily Calhoun, who is very ill, hardly expected to live. Mr Calhoun is better than last year, but still is not strong. He made a visit to 'Ain-Zehalteh, Sharôn, Mejd-el-Bâna, and Bhamdûn and Bhouwarah recently. He found the schools there thriving. Some of these are almost exclusively Druse villages, and yet they send even their girls. The teachers are all Protestants, and use only Christian books. One of the teachers seems a man of great zeal. He has been under the excommunication of the Papists for a long time, and yet he is received into houses of Papists and teaches their children. Recently I was called to Tripoli to see Mrs Wilson (then very ill, now recovered). But little progress is made there, but the brethren have pleasant intercourse with some Maronites above Jebail, and there are a number of individuals there who are of evangelical sentiments.

Last autumn I made an excursion, with others, to Baal-bec, the Cedars, &c. Mr Calhoun, William Thomson, and I, with three of

the ladies, rode to one of the highest summits back of the Cedars. I took up the aneroid barometer and found the height to be just about nine thousand English feet, or say six hundred less than Major Von Wildenbruch found some years since with his barometer. We were on the same point Mr Wildenbruch visited (I was with him), and it is called by the natives Fŭm-el-Mĭzâb. A point a little to the north seemingly a little higher is called Dhŏhr-el-Kŏdhîb. No one has visited it with the barometer, but it is only some two hundred feet or so higher than Fŭm-el-Mĭzâb.

Our mission circle have been unusually afflicted with weakness of body the past year, and I have been among the feeble ones. This has prevented an earlier notice of your letter. It is probable that I shall be obliged to go to the United States for my health, leaving in some two or three months. All join in regards to you. —I remain, yours, &c,

HENRY A. DE FOREST.

To C. W. M. VAN DE VELDE, Esq.,
Haarlem,
Holland.

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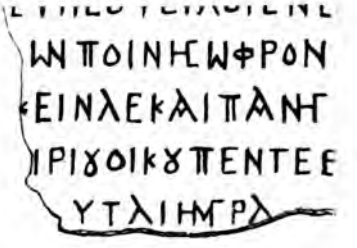

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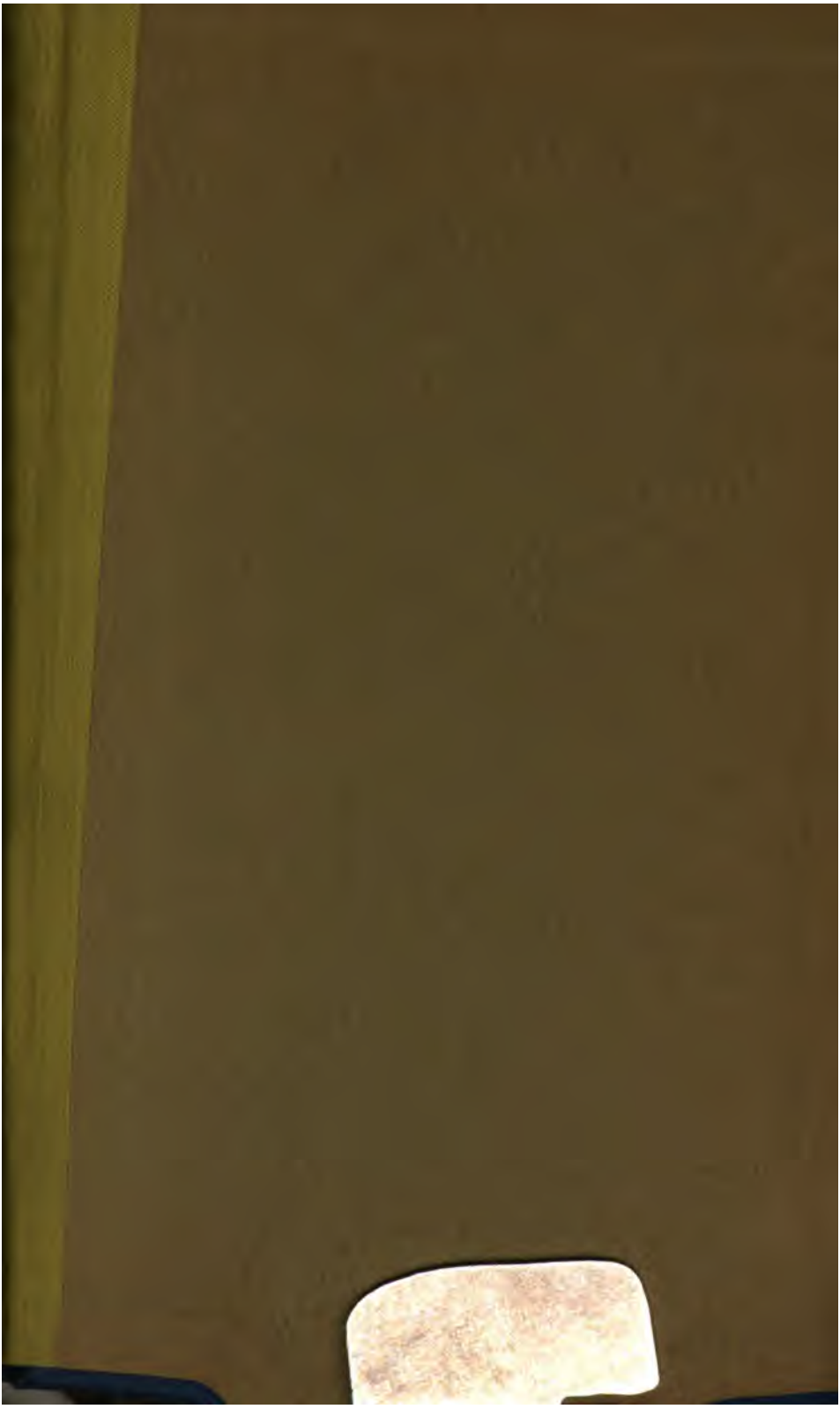
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